2019

The Politics of Place, the Urban-Rural Divide, and Geographic Identities in American Politics

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THE POLITICS OF PLACE, THE URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE, AND GEOGRAPHIC IDENTITIES IN AMERICAN POLITICS

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Mississippi

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May 2019

ABSTRACT

A myriad of factors affect American's perceptions of politics and political attitudes. From partisanship to religion, to race to socioeconomic status, Americans perceive the political world based on conceptions of "who they are." One such factor is the place in which people live. In this dissertation, I evaluate how Americans from urban and rural communities perceive the role of government, political candidates, and fellow citizens. I theorize that place has a moderating effect on people's perceptions on the role of government when they have different ideological predispositions from the communities in which they live. Additionally, I theorize that place acts a social identity that people use in their evaluations and perceptions of other individuals they may encounter.

To test these theories, I conduct a series of empirical tests using survey data from the American National Election Survey (ANES) and an original survey experiment. Chapter two examines how people's ideological perceptions are moderated by living in a particular area. Using the ANES data, I conduct a regression analysis with an interaction of the respondent's ideology and the geographic location. Chapter three analyzes how individuals perceive a political candidate based on partisan and geographic information presented to the respondent. Using an original survey experiment, this study seeks to illustrate how individuals across urban and rural America perceive Republican and Democratic candidates of different geographic backgrounds. Upon reading the candidate's information, respondents are asked to evaluate the candidate based on whether the respondent would support the candidate, whether the candidate

would represent their community well, and whether they have a general favorable impression of the candidate. Chapter four assesses how respondents perceive fellow citizens when they are presented with geographic information as well as information about their gun ownership and recycling habits. Respondents are then asked how favorable they find the person, how willing they would be to socially interact with the person, and how liberal or conservative they think the person is. The research and its subsequent findings contribute to the study and understanding of American political geography and the results suggest that place plays a role in political perceptions and evaluations.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Keith and Danna Fudge, my brother, Adam Fudge, and to Meagan. Thank you all for your love, encouragement, and support.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank the endless support of my family and friends who have checked in and offered words of encouragement and advice, my dissertation advisors, Dr. Jonathan Winburn, Dr. Conor Dowling, Dr. Robert Brown, and Dr. Jody Holland, for not only educating me about political science, but for being kind and gracious mentors during the pursuit of my graduate studies. Finally, I thank God for strength, wisdom, and guidance.

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CHAPTER I

THE POLITICS OF PLACE

It is well understood that there are myriad factors that influence an individual's political beliefs. From religion and race, to income and gender, demographic and sociological variables have been noted as primary influences on the understanding and perceptions of the political world. Still, one obvious characteristic of American life remains somewhat undervalued. A person's geography or "home" could very well play a significant role in the development of political attitudes and opinions. As such, the "politics of place" deserves a larger degree of study for the purposes of revealing the actual factors behind how one's place really shapes political behavior. As such, this dissertation seeks to answer and study the question: How does the place in which someone lives affect their political views?

Utilizing survey research and consulting previous academic literature, I posit that attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors vary across different geographic localities such as urban and rural areas. This line of research is broken into three empirical chapters that examines the interaction between geography and behavior. The first empirical chapter demonstrates the role of place on perceptions on the appropriate role of government in American society. I hypothesize that individuals in rural regions are less supportive of more government, while individuals from urban regions are more likely to support more government involvement, while accounting for and considering political ideologies. The second empirical chapter examines the evaluation of political candidates when geographic ties are emphasized. Using a survey experiment, respondents are asked to evaluate a hypothetical gubernatorial candidate based on a

description of the candidate. Included in the description of the candidate is a geographic identifier (urban/rural) as well as their partisanship (Democrat/Republican) and it is hypothesized that respondents are more predisposed to support individuals from their shared communities or geography. The third chapter analyzes how closely individuals identify with their communities and evaluate individuals from other types of communities. I hypothesize that the division between urban and rural America is not as much of a geographical divide, but rather a division of culture and ideals stemming from divergent ideologies and identity between the two areas. From this research, the goal is to illustrate a better understanding of the role geography plays in influencing political attitudes and behavior.

What is "Place"?

"Place" has been defined in a variety of ways across political science and sociology. Earlier research has emphasized the idea that place is a space wherein social interaction occurs (Agnew 1987). Agnew defines place in terms of three significant concepts: location, locale, and the sense of place (Agnew 1987). According to Agnew, location is the role a particular place plays in the economy of a region, locale represents the institutions and customs of the area, and sense of place is the idea that individuals form identities with a place, wherein it holds special meaning to them. Embedded in Agnew's definition of place is the idea that these three constructs are all equally intertwined with one another. As identity manifests through a culture or population in an area, it influences the institutions and customs, which in turn effects the importance or relevancy of a town or locality to the greater region and to the individuals who reside in such an area (Gimpel and Schuknecht 2004).

"Place," as defined by the work of Daniel Elazar, spans three dimensions: spatial, temporal, and cultural (Elazar 1994). The spatial dimension, according to Elazar, is fixed. A particular geographic place is unchanging and unmoved. Temporally, place is not fixed as it is

amenable to population shifts, historical change, and even technological change through advances in society. At the heart of Elazar's work is the concept of political culture. Following Elazar's logic, people occupy a space or locale over a particular span of time, and during that time, develop an affinity for a particular place. Budding out of this identity or affinity is the idea that culture perpetuates as the most relevant factor that defines place. As Elazar puts it, "culture may be regarded as the 'way of life' of a people" and that the "concept of culture refers to the explicit and implicit or overt and covert patterns of shared beliefs, values, and traditions about life held by a particular people" (Elazar 1994, 3). Similarly, place has been defined as a social construction, by which places are "networks of social relations" that are amenable to change or become static over time (Massey 1994).

As much as place acts as an incubator for social interaction and the development of culture, its importance for understanding political behavior is essential. Place is important because it serves as a structuring mechanism for how we behave (Pred 1990). When studying place it is valuable to go beyond a simple eyeball test. For example, urban areas are liberal because more liberals live there, or on the flip-side, rural areas are conservative because more conservatives live there. There is much more than meets the eye and why a more in-depth analysis is required. Place serves as a contextual socializer that shapes political perceptions, as space and place act as natural environments for political behavior to occur (Thrift 1983).

In short, place cannot be boiled down to a simplistic definition. Instead, rather than being a particular position or point in space, it represents a conceptualization of culture, identity, and social interaction. For the purpose of this research, I view place in a similar vein to Agnew and Elazar's perspectives, wherein place takes on a socializing role in the development of politics and behavior that is unique to locales and regions. In some sense, place socializes individuals' political views from the moment they move to a particular place and then during the length of

time they live in the area or region. In the next section, I discuss how place, using the aforementioned conceptualizations, matters for the study of political science and has been examined in classic and contemporary political science research.

The Concept of Place

Over time, place and political geography have been incorporated within the fabric of political science research. Earlier research emphasized the role of social interaction and social pressure on voting behavior (Berelson et al. 1954). In Berelson et al.'s work, voting was considered to be a process that was influenced based upon voters' social networks. As pivotal as Berelson's early work was in describing the influence of social groups on vote choice, embedded within their logic is the construct of place. For instance, while Elmira, New York, may look different today than it did in 1948, the culture and identity of such a place may hold a significant overarching explanation about the way politics is perceived across the varying groups discussed in the study. While occupations, religions, and partisanship are still valuable determinants of political behavior, these concepts may be conditioned by the culture of distinct locales and places. As such, the effect of place could also be endogenous given where someone lives shapes political attitudes and political behavior (Key 1949). Still, place should be considered as an indicator of behavior as it is always present in American political life.

When studying place and state politics, disaggregating such survey research can provide fine-grained analyses of the United States, perhaps better than national surveys. According to Gimpel and Schuknecht (2004), conventional survey research is rarely able to show an accurate concentration of people who share specific political, economic, and social characteristics. Additionally, states have been considered "laboratories of democracies" and within each particular laboratory come smaller geographic units, such as counties and individual cities. By moving down the scales of analyses, the study of place allows for richer detail and a deeper

understanding of political behavior. As a result, classic and contemporary political science research has incorporated the concept of place in the study of state politics and political geography.

A large portion of political geography research has focused on the relationship between the institution of government and the rational choices of individuals living in particular areas. Earlier research posited the idea that individuals in a given place are the key units of analysis. As such, individuals are considered to be "interested decision makers who can calculate potential benefits and costs subject to elements of risk and uncertainty" (Ostrom 1972, 57). Ostrom's theory is built on Tiebout's assertion that individuals may "move with their feet," wherein individuals choose to live in places that are able to better maximize their own utilities (Tiebout 1956). Ostrom further posits that individuals are utility maximizers, who live in certain areas to reap benefits of government services. As such, people *choose* where to live based on their own decision-making calculus, instead of place acting as a socializer. Herein lies a conundrum within the idea that place matters. This issue could even be conceptualized as a "chicken before the egg" puzzle. Here, the counterargument and rationale for this present research is that individuals become shaped and socialized by the place in which they live and adopt perceptions about government and politics given their environment.

In an attempt to wrestle with these ideas, other literature has recognized the propensity for individuals to change their political views when they move to new surroundings (Brown 1988). Brown's work refuted the idea that people's perceptions of politics are static when moving from one place to another. According to Brown, individuals who migrates to more liberal areas were more likely to become more liberal as a result of socialization within their new location. Brown's argument stands in stark contrast to the idea proposed by Campbell et al; who would assert both people's partisanship and ideological leanings are able to remain static

(Campbell et al. 1960). In that vein of logic, place serves as a significant mediator of political behavior. Gimpel also demonstrates the increased likelihood that place alters perceptions of politics. The longer one lives in a particular place or region, the partisanship of residents begins to change, thus leading to the notion that place matters (Gimpel 1999).

Place matters because it is common among all Americans. Everyone has to come from and live somewhere and the life experiences that occur in particular places are essential in shaping the way people view the world. While many would argue that Americans are sorting along party lines, the phenomenon could be developing at a deeper level. In studying the different attitudes across places and the division between them, we, as scholars, political practitioners, and campaign strategists, will be able to better understand the often convoluted fabric of American politics.

The Role of Place in Contemporary Research

As mentioned, place has been defined and conceptualized in myriad ways. Still, much work remains to be done regarding the role it plays in American political research. Place is central to the idea that individuals, through an increased population mobility in recent decades, are likely to perceive politics differently given their political environment (Gimpel 1999; Gimpel and Schuknecht 2003). This section examines how place has been analyzed across three distinct locales present in the United States: urban, suburban, and rural.

Research specifically analyzing urban politics is well established and continues to be of interest to contemporary scholars of political science. Urban politics has widely been considered to be concerned with the institutions of localized government in metropolitan settings (Judge et al. 1995). As such, the study of urban politics tends to focus on concepts of power, governance, and theories of institutions. Since that time, political scientists have branched away from normative theories of urban politics and focused more on the ways in which *location* affects the

behavior and perceptions of individuals both within and beyond certain localities. For example, cities have been shown to be electoral safe havens for Democratic presidential candidates, yet turnout in urban areas is declining due to the "flight" of likely voters to the nearby suburbs (Sauerzopf and Swanstrom 1999). Budding out of such research is the idea that urban areas are separated from other areas surrounding the metropolitan region and inevitably create a divide with suburban areas (Gainsborough 2001).

Suburban areas present intriguing cases for research at the intersection of place and politics. Suburban areas have been argued to be a significant hindrance to political participation and the importance of local government given their segregation from the metropolitan communities (Oliver 2001). As a result, suburban areas are significantly different than their urban counterparts in their perceptions of government, politics, and partisan vote choice (Gainsborough 2005). Furthermore, studies of suburban areas have increased given their importance to national elections. McKee and Shaw illustrate this importance by demonstrating that suburban voters serve as "swing" voters and have increasingly become more favorable to Democratic candidates (McKee and Shaw 2003). These works continue to demonstrate the idea that place is significantly different as one moves from the city to the suburbs and consequently, place can be an important mechanism for political behavior.

As much research has emphasized the differences between urban and suburban America, a recent trend has emerged that specifically focuses upon rural America. As small, rural towns may not be of greater importance for political science survey research (given small sample sizes) compared to urban and suburban localities, these areas are worth consideration for a comprehensive understanding of political behavior in the United States. They are especially important considering the nationwide preoccupation with electoral maps that show "blue" or Democratic areas and then seas of "red" or Republican leaning areas across the middle of

America and the South. Granted, understanding the red and blue divide has been central to the study of the politics of place (Frank 2004; Bartels 2006).

Core to the idea that rural America is markedly different from urban and suburban America is the concept of culture and identity (Bell 1992). The social environment that prevails in urban and rural areas is rooted in their own distinct cultures, influenced by economics, race, religion, and political differences (Gimpel and Schuknecht 2004). For example, rural voters were more likely to support President George W. Bush due to his disapproval of gay marriage (Francia and Baumgartner 2006). In this particular example, the issue of gay marriage drove a wedge between urban and rural America. George W. Bush was met with approval in rural America given his issue position that was in line with the cultural preference of rural voters. Perhaps, a cultural wedge may be contributing to the modern-day division between urban and rural America, and other research has sought to better understand this cleavage between urban and rural voters over time. Since 1952, rural voters have consistently been more Republican than their urban counterparts and in the early 2000s, this divide began to grow increasingly wider across both the North and the South (McKee 2008). Perhaps then, rural America's traditionally based culture and way of life is incredibly divergent from that of urban America. Similarly, research shows rural Americans hold negative perceptions of urban America and in turn, government institutions in general. This geographic divide is rooted in the idea that rural individuals attribute their economic deprivation to urban elites, who fail to understand "how the other half lives" (Walsh 2012). One consequence of this view is that individuals from rural areas believe that political decision makers ignore rural areas and that distributive resources in terms of government spending are disproportionately given to urban areas over rural areas (Cramer 2016). According to Gimpel and Schuknecht, studying the political attitudes and behavior of individuals in rural America is valuable for the study of place and politics as "rural areas are political

battlegrounds, our system of representation is based on geography, and conflicts between rural and urban areas over who should get what are intensifying" (Gimpel and Schuknecht 2003).

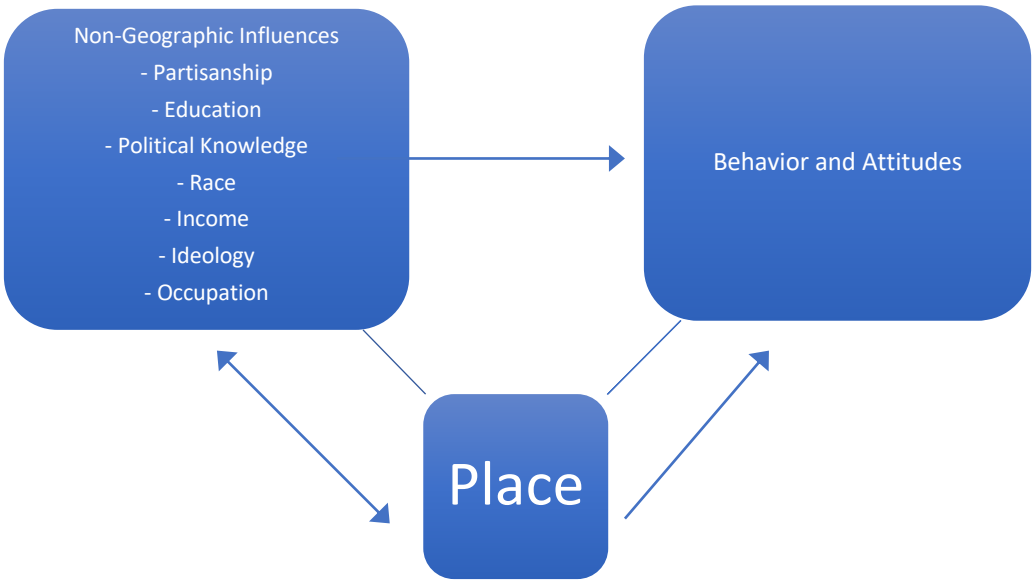
In a similar vein to Tiebout, Oppenheimer posits that the more mobile a society becomes the more likely individuals are to make a conscious choice to, in fact, relocate into communities with neighbors who share their political attitudes (Oppenheimer 2005). Oppenheimer concludes that the reasons for a more divided America in terms of electoral competition across Congressional districts is due to rural liberals leaving for politically progressive urban areas. As such, Americans may choose to live in particular places so their views are reinforced by others who share their beliefs and politics. Additionally, citizens may eventually become socialized and integrated into a community's values and belief systems, even when they do not wholly support the beliefs and attitudes of a particular area. This idea further extends the logic that embedded in "place" is a sense of shared culture and identity that could potentially affect political attitudes. In some way, identity and culture are integral to the development of *community*, wherein people develop, "an image in the mind of an individual, of a group toward whose members she feels a sense of similarity, belonging, or fellowship" (Wong 2010, 6). Central to the argument that place matters in the study of political behavior is the idea that this shared identity within a community from a particular geographic locality shapes and influences the way in which individuals view the world around them. This present research will move forward the notions of sorting, the closeness to community, and the development of social identities to places.

Theories of Political Geography and Place

Building from the prior scholarship regarding the politics of place, this present research seeks to extend the idea that place matters with the development of a framework centered around three distinct theories of political geography.

Depicted in Figure 1.1 is a model that illustrates the theoretical idea behind the present research.

Figure 1.1
Theoretical Model of Place's Influence on Politics



As previously demonstrated in political science research, there are a number of concepts that influence political behavior and attitudes. The theory behind my research acknowledges their importance, but also attempts to shed light on how those concepts are conditioned by place. At its basic level, the model displayed in Figure 1.1 is interactive. In other words, each of the three prongs (place, non-geographic influences, and behavior and attitudes) is interrelated. This model demonstrates how they interact in a few ways.

1. Non-geographic influences such as partisanship, education, knowledge, income, or ideology influence where people live. In other words, a place acts as a positive reinforcement where people flock to live along like-minded individuals. This theoretical logic is buttressed by the ideas of Tiebout, Ostrom, and more recently by Bishop (2009), wherein individuals choose to live in particular areas to reap the benefits from a government that advocates

for their desired policies. Furthermore, people are sorting themselves into places where they are surrounded by those who share similar political beliefs and attitudes.

2. Non-geographic influences are conditioned by place. In this case, place serves as a moderator of beliefs such as partisanship or ideology. Here it is theorized that living in a particular place could either make individuals more conservative/Republican or more liberal/Democratic. Consequently, place can also be conditioned by the types of individuals who live in a particular area. For example, more wealthy individuals in an area could lead to individuals who are more conservative in nature and thus, advocating for more conservative economic policies. In some sense, the conditioning or socializing effect that place has on other non-geographic variables can lead to the entrenchment of political beliefs and attitudes.

3. Place can serve as a sociological screen or socializer for individuals, wherein place, through the development of identity and culture, can alter perceptions of different policies, political candidates, or individuals from different geographic areas. For example, individuals from rural (urban) areas may view others from urban (rural) areas as the "other" or not fitting in within their society. This concept could also lead to the perception that political candidates from areas outside a particular region are deemed to not share the same culture or identity of some locale. Additionally, individuals may hold a grudge against those who live in their communities, but do not share their political perspectives.

4. Perhaps, place only plays a minor role in the development of political behavior and attitudes. In this case, place does *not* play a pivotal role in the conditioning of political behavior or attitudes.

As mentioned, geographic differences in terms of political thought have become prevalent in contemporary American society. The aforementioned theoretical propositions provide an overview of how place can affect an individual's political ideas and perceptions. Still, a primary goal of this research is to demonstrate how people view politics differently based on where they live. In the subsequent chapters, I apply the aforementioned theories and evaluate whether place plays a significant role in the perceptions of individuals from urban and rural America.

As previously stated, rural areas are predominantly conservative and it is assumed that many who live there share the same ideological sentiment. The same can be said for urban areas that are characterized by more liberal attitudes. However, it begs the question, how do ideological outliers perceive politics when their views on politics do not align with those of their neighbors? In the second chapter, I attempt to analyze how individuals perceive the role of government when they hold different ideological perceptions than those in their geographic environment. This analysis seeks to test the second theory posited that views can be moderated and conditioned when living in a particular place.

A person's social identity or group attachment can also play a role in the perceptions towards others who either share or do not share similar geographic characteristics. Rooted in the logic of social identity theory (Tajfel 1971), individuals perceive themselves as a part of a particular group and are likely to positively evaluate others from that group and negatively evaluate those who are not of the same group. Here, I consider that "place" serves as a type of social identity and acts as a perceptual screen when encountering other individuals in political

and social environments. The third and fourth chapters of the dissertation examine and test the third theory that rural and urban individuals perceive others differently when they learn about a political candidate's or another citizen's geographic background.

Overall, the four theoretical considerations mentioned here will either confirm or refute the idea that place affects political behavior and perceptions of individuals. In the next section, I discuss how I conceptually define and measure an individual's geography in order to assess the influence of place-based attachments and geographic identity.

Measuring and Defining "Urban" and "Rural"

In an attempt to better demonstrate how place acts as a significant influencer and factor in the analysis of political behavior, it is essential to parse out the definitions of the types of localities being examined. Urban has been defined as regions that include approximately 50,000 or more people or areas with a minimum of 2,500 people and less than 50,000 people (U.S. Census). Rural has been characterized as "all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area." The Census Bureau defines areas that are urban when the region features a dense population, extensive land development, and the presence of airports. Whereas rural areas tend to have lower levels of population density, have undeveloped land (or more farm land), and are more distant from urban areas. In other words, when areas feature more "open country" and are isolated in terms of distance to an urban city-center, those areas tend to be considered rural. Still, these definitions are in some ways too vague when trying to categorize people and populations into the two groups. Therefore, it is necessary to find appropriate measures that are both conceptually and theoretically consistent with the rationale of the present research.

As this research seeks to examine the political and social differences between individuals from urban and rural areas, I consider the extent to which these areas are distinct from one

another and separate places that harbor different ideas about politics among populations. Therefore, I measure place and geography in two different ways: objective and subjective. First, I utilize a more objective measure of place, where I categorize an individual's home county as either more urban or more rural. Two different sources of urban-rural classifications stand out when assessing the most appropriate approximation of geography: the U.S. Department of Agricultural and the National Center for Health Statistics.

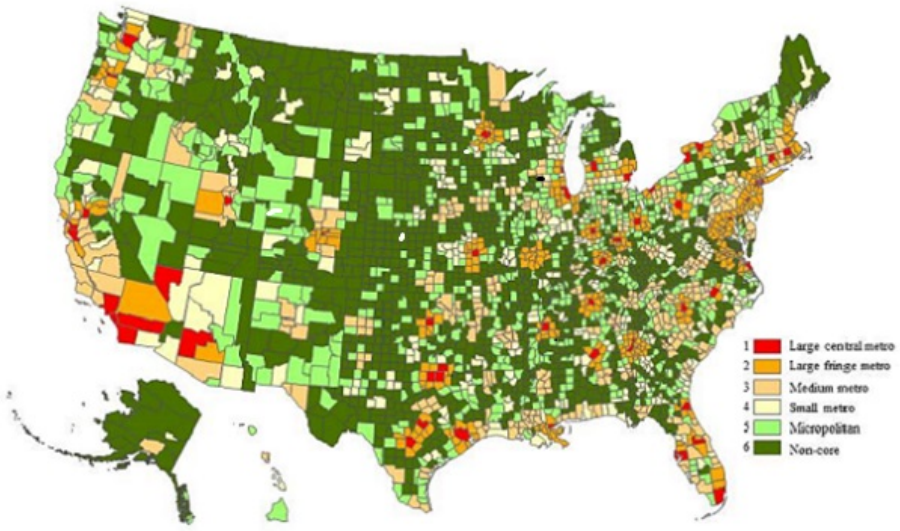
According to the United States Department of Agriculture, "the 2013 Rural-Urban Continuum Codes form a classification scheme that distinguishes metropolitan *counties* by the population size of their metro area, and nonmetropolitan counties by degree of urbanization and adjacency to a metro area" (USDA). As such, for the purpose of developing theories of political geography related to identity or sociological "closeness", population density is considered a potentially important measurement for this research. The USDA Rural-Urban Continuum codes account for this to some degree, offering a finer grained understanding of the measurement of "place" and actually paint a more accurate picture of defining urban, suburban, and rural. The Rural-Urban Continuum has nine categories for geography (3 metro and 6 non-metro). Metro counties are those with populations of 1 million or more, those with populations of 250,000 to 1 million, and those fewer than 250,000. The non-metro counties are areas with a population of 20,000 or more (adjacent to a metro area), a population of 20,000 or more (not adjacent to a metro area), a population of 2,500 to 19,999 (adjacent to a metro area), a population of 2,500 to 19,999 (not adjacent to a metro area), a population less than 2,500 (adjacent to a metro area), and a population less than 2,500 (not adjacent to a metro area). Areas around "metro" counties are considered urban in nature given the relative densely populated region and these areas are perhaps prone to the influence of a nearby metro. However, there is a slight issue in the way in which some areas are coded in the USDA urban-rural scale. For example, some counties that are

"rural" or "non-metro" yet are adjacent to a metro area are likely influenced or somewhat geographically "urban" than a traditional "rural" town. Therefore, a better measure is required that is able to more precisely separate counties and areas to ensure the most accurate delineation between urban and rural areas.

Perhaps a better measure of urban-rural classification comes from the National Center for Health Statistics. The NCHS urban-rural classification scheme is comparable to the USDA measurement as it utilizes a similar scale from most urban to most rural when measuring areas based on population. The NCHS measure, however, designates areas based on a place's location or proximity to a metropolitan population with a simpler breakdown of the types of counties found in the United States. The NCHS began its classification of geographic areas for the purposes of analyzing health differences across geography. Since its inception, the NCHS scheme has continued to account for population shifts and changes in each of the specific designated geographic areas. The NCHS categorizes counties into six specific classifications – (1) large central metro, (2) large fringe metro, (3) medium metro, (4) small metro, (5) micropolitan[1], and (6) non-core. Figure 1.2 displays a map of the United States and county designations based on the NCHS coding scheme.

[1]According to the NCHS, "micropolitan" is defined as an "urban cluster" or an area that is not distinctly "urban" but has a population of 10,000 – 49,999 and border large metro counties.

Figure 1.2: NCHS Urban-Rural Classification Map



Still, having an accurate measurement of place is imperative to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between geography and politics. In the second chapter, the NCHS urban-rural classification is merged with the American National Election Survey (ANES) data to match a respondent to a geographic area based on the county in which they live. The urban-rural classification is applied to each respondent in the ANES survey based on the county where the respondent lives. The NCHS classification categorizes respondents into geographic areas and identifies individuals as either being from urban areas (large metros), suburban (fringe metros), mid-sized and micropolitan areas, and rural areas that are distant from urban areas or those areas that neighbor metro counties. By using the NCHS as an objective measure, I am able to accurately disseminate which respondents are distinct in their geography between urban and rural areas. In order to accurately assess the differences between urban and rural areas, I must ensure that both areas are separate from one another and that when I am examining rural individuals, it is clear that they are "untouched" and far removed from urban populations.

The second way in which this research determines geography of citizens is through a subjective measure of an individual's geographic area. In the subsequent chapters and analyses, this research employs a nationwide survey of roughly 3,000 Americans who are asked to subjectively describe the place in which they live. By utilizing a subjective measure, this research is able to examine how individuals characterize their communities. Rooted in the subjective measure is the idea that people are attached to, or identify with, their respective geographic area. The subjective measure captures who respondents think they are in terms of a group identity. Additionally, as this research is concerned with individual perceptions, the subjective measurement of place provides a perceptual view of geography, which in turn leads to the perceptions on government, political candidates, and people from other geographic areas.

Chapter Summaries

Geographic Differences of Individual Views toward the Role of Government

First, it has been well-established that a divide exists between "red" and "blue" America (Frank 2004; Bartels 2006). Yet, as mentioned in previous literature, this divide may be present due to the divisions between urban and rural Americans with regard to a general view on the role of government. As such, I theorize that rural America is less favorable of government involvement in general, rejecting the notion of "big government" in favor of a government that keeps out of their traditional way of life. Additionally, as one moves further out from urban city centers to more rural regions Americans grow less favorable of government involvement. This theoretical idea is supported by the work of Cramer (2016) as she illustrates that rural Americans from Wisconsin are distrusting of government and believe that the government provision of benefits is biased to favor "urban liberals," who are less deserving of government services, and are receiving such benefits from "liberal elites" in government. For the suburban areas, Oliver posits that suburban America is characterized by a growing dissatisfaction with urbanization that

subsequently leads to favoring less government. By theorizing that rural and urban Americans are divided on the appropriate role of government, this research will provide a further example to how place matters in terms of ideological disposition and a general feeling about politics and government.

In this chapter the chief premise is to understand how place influences perception on the broad role of government and opinions regarding spending towards particular government programs. In order to test this theory regarding the role of government, I utilize data from the American National Election Survey from the years 1994-2012. From the dataset, I place respondents into categories of urban/rural/suburban in accordance with the NCHS's urban-rural continuum based on their reported county. Upon designating respondents into a specific geographic category (urban areas/mid-size areas/rural areas), I examine their evaluations of government through survey questions regarding spending for public programs, government spending towards welfare, and government spending for social security. Also included in the analysis are standard control variables such as partisanship, race, gender, income, political ideology, geographic region, and age. Using an ordinal logistic regression along with a marginal effects analysis, I measure the influence of the aforementioned control variables along with the geographic categorical variables. As mentioned in the previous section, it is expected that rural Americans will be less likely to favor more government intervention and spending compared to urban and mid-sized counties. Additionally, I analyze whether individuals across different political ideologies have their beliefs moderated by the place in which they live. I parse out the findings across each geographical region and evaluate the results.

I find that place does in fact moderate the opinions of certain groups of people, more specifically rural liberals. The findings demonstrate that ideology drives Americans' support for these specific policies and that place can serve as a conditioning effect on the standard

ideological view. Liberals living in rural areas are less supportive of government spending than their liberal counterparts living in more urban areas. Additionally, rural liberals are less supportive of welfare spending; however, they are more supportive of Social Security than liberals from urban areas.

Place-Based Appeals and Geographic Identities: How Place Affects Voter Perceptions of Political Candidates

In this chapter, the primary question is how does the geographic background of particular political candidates affect voter behavior and perceptions of individuals across various geographic localities? Here, I theorize that individuals will be more favorable to candidates when a candidate has a shared geographic "identity" with the individual. It is well known that partisanship plays a significant role in the development of political attitudes and evaluation of political candidates and government policies, but this theory seeks to illustrate that geography and the environment in which someone lives can moderate such evaluations even when partisan cues are present. For a hypothetical example, a rural individual who perhaps holds a strong predisposition to the Republican Party may actually view a rural Democrat more favorably than a generic Democrat or an urban Republican due to their shared geographic identity. Should this example and the general theory hold true, there would be evidence that geography can have some moderating effect when it comes to voter behavior and decision-making.

Culture has often gone hand in hand when discussing the role of place in American politics research. Here, building from Wong's (2010) logic that individuals have a shared common identity or set of values with others from their geographic communities, I attempt to understand how Americans view political candidates when geographic backgrounds are presented to voters. In this chapter, using an original survey experiment, I ask questions about the community in which they live, feelings towards political parties and government institutions, the politics of their social network groups and community, and their feelings towards "outsiders"

or individuals/politicians who do not come from their communities. Most importantly, I create an experiment where respondents are presented a hypothetical gubernatorial candidate running for election in their state. The candidate's description is randomized across four different geographic/partisan combinations. Upon reading the biographical information, respondents are asked to evaluate the candidate based on whether the respondent would support the candidate, whether they would represent their community well, and how favorable they find the candidate. This research demonstrates the propensity of individuals across the different geographic areas to identify with political parties and their communities and subsequently draw conclusions about people and candidates from areas of the state that are similar or different from their own.

As expected, respondents who shared partisanship with the candidate were more likely to vote for the candidate, believe that the candidate would represent their community well, and found the candidate to be favorable. When introducing geography into the calculations of respondents, those who shared partisanship and geography with the candidate were more likely to believe they would represent the respondent's community well compared to those who shared partisanship but did not share geography. Interestingly enough, when respondents shared geography with the hypothetical candidate but did not share partisanship, they viewed the candidate slightly more negative. These findings lead to the notion that geography does increase positive evaluations of candidates, as well as the idea that when a candidate appears "out of place", individuals are less fond of those individuals as they do not share the same geographic background.

Geographic Identities and Social Divisions between Urban and Rural America

In order to better illustrate the divide that exists between urban and rural America, it is important to understand the sociological underpinnings of these distinct regions. As mentioned previously, embedded within place comes a distinct culture within a geographic region (Agnew

1987; Elazar 1994; Gimpel and Schuknecht 2004). Based on the previous empirical literature, rural residents have been theorized to have a "traditional" way of life with negative views towards those who "don't understand how the other half lives" (Cramer 2012). Such views illustrate that culture is valuable to those from rural areas and that negative perceptions manifest towards others who do not share the same cultural values.

Furthermore, the concept of community plays a significant role in the development of place (Wong 2010). In her book *Boundaries of Obligation in American Politics*, Cara Wong demonstrates how individuals across the United States "imagine" their communities and set boundaries for who should benefit from government policies and services (Wong 2010, 5). Wong's approximation of the concept of community is built upon the "image that individuals carry in their heads, not the issue of acquaintance with all other members" (Wong 2010, 5). Therefore, I theorize that Americans have a shared, common identity with those who share a similar geographic community and subsequently evaluate those individuals more positively than those who do not share the same geographic background. According to Wong's research, an individual's community acts as a social identity or a feeling of "belonging." Conversely, individuals may view people from other "types" of communities to have different values and thus are less likely to identify with other geographic regions or locales (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Building from these theories, this study examines the importance of culture and shared values among individuals from a common place and to help better explain the perceptions Americans hold toward each other based on geographic differences. It is expected that individuals will share similar perceptions with their neighbors and community. Furthermore, geographic localities that are different from one's own geographic area will be viewed as being inconsistent with their community's values and politics. This idea presents a possible sociological and psychological reason for the urban/rural divide. Perhaps, politics is not necessarily the great

divider it is proposed to be, but rather the divide has sociological underpinnings that are rooted in individual identities and shared communal values.

Using another survey experiment, respondents "meet" someone who either comes from a small town (rural), large city (urban), or does not have a place (control). Additional information is provided about whether the person owns a gun or does not own a gun and whether the person recycles or does not recycle. Respondents are asked whether they have a favorable impression of the individual, whether they would socially interact with the individual, and whether they find the individual to be more liberal or conservative. The analysis assesses the responses of those from urban, rural, and mixed areas (somewhat urban/somewhat rural) using a difference of means analysis.

According to the results, respondents had a positive impression of the hypothetical person when they learned they came from a similar geographic area and exhibited characteristics that were similar to others from the respondent's location. Rural respondents tended to have positive impressions of the person when they came from a small town and owned a gun. Urban respondents had similar responses when they learned the person came from a large city and did not own a gun. Rural respondents were more willing to socially interact with someone who owned a gun and came from either a small town or large city. Urban respondents were less willing to interact with someone who owned a gun in general, especially when they came from a large city. When evaluating the hypothetical person's political ideology, rural respondents typically believed the individual from both small towns and large cities were more liberal even when the person owned a gun. Urban respondents found gun owners, specifically those from large cities to be more conservative. These findings demonstrate that people are more likely to be favorable towards those who share similar backgrounds to them and less likely to engage or approve of those who do not seem similar to people from their geographic area. Therefore,

individuals from both urban and rural America tend to look upon each other with their geographic identities in mind and, consequently, perceive one another differently within social contexts.

Conclusion

The fifth and final chapter concludes with a comprehensive discussion of the politics of place and the revelations from the previous chapters' analyses. By examining the urban-rural divide within the context of perceptions of government, political candidates, and individuals from other geographic areas, the research in this dissertation illustrates the value of incorporating place into future discussions of political behavior research. Furthermore, it may make all those red and blue maps on television easier to understand and allow casual observers of politics to better comprehend the political world of the United States.

CHAPTER II

GEOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES OF INDIVIDUAL VIEWS TOWARD THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

A central tenet of democracy is the interaction between a government and its citizens. The government provides a number of goods and services that benefit Americans every day. From traveling on public roads to receiving mail, government has long been a provider to millions of people across the United States. Consequently, the role of government continues to be a hotly debated political topic. Government has often been scrutinized for the overregulation of business, being a burden for citizens due to the complexities of bureaucracy, and placing unnecessary laws on Americans, which may restrict civil liberties and freedom. As a result, political pundits, politicians, and scholars have often evaluated various policies and government actions in a negative light. To some, government is simply too big and intervenes too much in the lives of Americans. To others, government is not big enough and fails to encompass or provide the necessary services for a sustainable American life.

It is not surprising that politicians often use the role of government as a campaign talking point in order to sway public sentiment towards their preferred points of view. President Ronald Reagan once expressed his disdain for big government when he proclaimed that the most dangerous words in the English language were, "We're from the government and we're here to help." On the other side of the aisle, President Bill Clinton once exclaimed that the "era of big government is over." Both presidents were generally popular and this was perhaps due in part to their public appeals that less government means better government. This same type of debate

has existed since the early formation of American government as Founders desired a strong central government, where others sought a small government where power could be devolved to the states in order to avoid the tyrannical oppression that Great Britain once imposed on the colonies echoing, as Thomas Jefferson said, "The best government is that which governs least."

Political elites and policy decision-makers are consistently entrenched in this battle for the direction of America with regard to how government should function, and while their opinion certainly matters, perhaps the better question is, what factors affect perceptions of governmental policies? This research seeks to understand how individuals perceive specific policies that are rooted in the scope and overarching role of government in American society. While previous research has focused on the variation of views on public policy across demographics such as income and race as well as political perceptions and characteristics such as ideology and partisanship (Ellis and Stimson 2012; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002), the focus here is on how much variation exists between individuals of different geographies.

More recent work finds that rural Americans hold a distrust towards government generally and therefore do not support government involvement (Cramer 2012; 2016). This study extends Cramer's logic that place serves as an influencing factor on political perceptions. This study consequently demonstrates that place acts as a moderator on perspectives. Liberals in rural areas compared to those in urban areas are less supportive of increased government spending and are less supportive of a spending increase in welfare programs. Overall, the findings demonstrate that living in rural America, especially for liberals, can have a significant influence on perspectives on the role of government and public policy, which is further evidence that an urban-rural divide adds nuance to the ideological divisions in contemporary American politics.

Perceptions on Government Policies and Spending

Much of the literature regarding the role of government has focused on how individuals perceive government spending and the ways in which attitudes toward the role of government are affected by sociological and ideological factors. Additionally, for the purpose of explaining the division between individuals of varying geographies, existing research has promulgated the ideas that individuals' ideas about politics and culture are shaped by their environment and their identity with a particular place or population.

This previous research has attempted to illustrate how Americans develop attitudes regarding government spending or an increased role of government. Such research also examines the relationship between government spending and public opinion in order to gain a better understanding of how Americans feel about the role of government. Jacoby (1994) demonstrates that attitudes on government spending are shaped more by symbolic considerations rather than substantive content of the policies. Symbolic content activates responses in citizens given their ideological or partisan predispositions. A particular policy may take on a new meaning when presented to individuals from different groups and furthermore, the concept of "spending" may actually be interpreted as "welfare," which presents a symbolic idea on its own. When the concept of "welfare" is activated in the mind of individuals, they perhaps interpret that to be associated with more government involvement.

Other research has discussed issue framing and how the packaging of government programs by political elites to the masses affects perceptions of the role of government. Perceptions on government policy have been shown to be *group-centric* in the sense that people judge particular policy initiatives based on who benefits from the proposed policy. Therefore, group-centrism follows as a particular heuristic that guides individuals on their evaluations of government activity in a more simplistic manner (Nelson and Kinder 1996; Popkin 1994). Still,

while individuals may be able to perceive politics through their group-centric lenses, they are still subject to considerable influence by political parties and elites. The idea of group-centrism is predicated on individuals being able to connect members of a particular group with policies. Additionally, it can be inferred that individuals will view particular groups as "winners" and "losers" of government policies and can either increase or decrease support. Furthermore, when negative frames are used such as the claim that welfare recipients are "freeloaders," a negative stigma enters the minds of certain groups and thus, activates stereotypes that influence their predispositions towards welfare. The way in which government spending is framed to the public is clearly a product of partisan strategies to gain public support and appeals. Issue framing influences people in specific ways depending on their personal characteristics such as race, age, gender, or income (Jacoby 2000). Most striking among studies of issue framing on government spending attitudes are the findings that individuals who were provided with more specific issue frames, where more transparent details about an issue were provided, were more supportive of government spending programs.

Other research has examined similar phenomenon specifically with regard to the concept of race, political sophistication, and values. Goren (2003) illustrates that white opinion of government spending is not as much a single issue of racial difference between whites and blacks, but is influenced by how well individuals understand the differences between undeserving and deserving poor. Spending programs that target the undeserving poor are significantly likely to be evaluated by sophisticated white individuals through the lenses of racial stereotypes. Racial stereotyping affects beliefs on welfare and government spending but has minimal if any influence on other non-welfare social programs (Goren 2008). It is clear that racial perceptions are significant in determining attitudes toward government welfare spending. Additionally, Americans have ordered hierarchical values that influence their beliefs toward

government spending policies as individuals with distinct differences between the values of "liberty" and "equality" have significantly divergent perspectives on government spending, wherein those who favor equality are more likely to support welfare spending and those who value liberty are less likely to do so (Jacoby 2006).

Further research has demonstrated that a significant lack of trust of welfare recipients has created a negative perception of government influence to help individuals get ahead (Gilens 1999). Trust in government can significantly affect one's perception of government effectiveness and whether the government is acting in the best interests of citizens. As trust in the government declines, government policies and actions are deemed less necessary or "wanted" by the American public (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000). Furthermore, the concept of political trust is moderated by ideological preferences, wherein individuals who lean more conservative support government spending policies based on their level of trust in government (Rudolph and Evans 2005). Therefore, ideology along with trust in government work in tandem towards an individuals' evaluation of government spending policies.

Overall, perceptions on the role of government in the lives of Americans are subject to considerable influence across both political and sociological variables. When attempting to measure attitudes toward the appropriate role of government, it is valuable to consider factors such as race, ideology, age, education, and gender. While it is well understood these factors influence the ways in which individuals perceive the role of government, there has been little work that examines the role of place and its influence on attitudes toward government. What work has been done illustrates a foundation of research that indicates the politics of place matter for the study of political behavior and consequently for this present study.

Place and its Role in the Study of Political Behavior

Aside from the common determinants of political attitudes and perceptions, a fair amount

of research is devoted to the politics of place, where one's geographic location significantly affects one's ideas about politics and government. More specifically, recent research has discussed the idea that an urban-rural divide exists in the United States in terms of how people living in those regions perceive the political world around them. Earlier works posited that "a sense of place" is formed through the personal and emotional attachments that individuals have to a particular region or locale (Agnew 1987). This attachment serves as a similar psychological mechanism as partisanship for the purposes of understanding and perceiving politics (Campbell et al. 1960).

While doubts have been raised as to whether an urban-rural divide is actually prevalent in modern society (Misra 2018), previous and contemporary literature have presented significant findings demonstrating that not only does place matter, but it serves as a valuable mechanism for political socialization. For example, people from rural locations have a propensity to consider themselves distinct and living a different way of life from individuals in urban areas (Bell 1992; Gimpel and Schuknecht 2003). As individuals have some sort of "tie" to a particular place, they are also likely to have their identity reinforced through interaction with like-minded individuals in their local residential networks (Blokland and Savage 2001). As a result, individuals may choose to select where they live based on the political leanings, policies, or like-minded partisans in a particular locality (Bishop 2009; McDonald 2011; Cho, Gimpel, and Hui 2012). Perhaps self-sorting has contributed to the partisan and geographic divisions that have become prevalent in contemporary American politics (McKee 2008). Rural areas and the South are now politically more conservative than the rest of the country, especially compared to the more liberal urban and Northern regions. In consequence, individuals from these distinct regions and geographic localities have unique perspectives on politics and government, people, and public policy.

Socioeconomically, the urban-rural divide is rooted in the idea that rural individuals

attribute their economic deprivation to urban elites, who fail to understand "how the other half lives" in rural areas (Walsh 2012). As a consequence, these rural individuals are more likely to favor limited government and believe the appropriate role of government is best when "urban elites" are not making decisions on behalf of rural interests. This "rural resentment" (Cramer 2016) fosters a sense of distrust and thus, leads to rural Americans holding negative predispositions towards government. Furthermore, the urban-rural divide is perhaps fostered through the ideas that individuals from urban and rural areas are significantly different from one another in terms of their values and lifestyles, political decision makers overlook rural areas, and distributive resources in terms of government spending are disproportionately given to urban areas over rural areas (Cramer 2016).

The social identities that are formed through geography have had significant implications for the study of political behavior. Political geography and the identities formed from living in particular regions have allowed scholars to better understand voting behavior across the United States in terms of how citizens view government, political parties, and policy issues. Campaigns view regions as political battlegrounds, and when the campaign is able to understand the "lay of the land," they may be able to tailor their campaign to the specific ideologies of the individuals who reside there. As scholars continue to understand political geography and more specifically the urban-rural divide, it is essential to understand how the areas and the people living in those regions perceive politics and, in turn, lead to a clearer picture of the intersection between geographic influence and politics.

Theory/Hypotheses

Hypotheses of Place and the Role of Government

Building from previous research, I seek to test three specific hypotheses on how the role of place affects perspectives on the role of government and public policy. It is expected that rural

America will be less favorable of more government spending and welfare due in part to the resentment many rural Americans have demonstrated towards government in general (Cramer 2016). According to Cramer, rural Americans hold the belief that urban citizens are the only beneficiaries of government spending and welfare programs, hence they are less likely to be supportive of such spending policies. Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Rural Americans are expected to be less favorable of increases in government spending compared to urban Americans.

While it is not only expected that place will be a significant factor in determining differences on government involvement and public policy, political ideology is also expected to be important in explaining political behavior or perceptions. As mentioned previously, individuals who are conservative are more likely to favor a smaller government with less government involvement. Conversely, liberals are primarily associated with supporting more social welfare policies and therefore are more likely to favor more government involvement. Here, the second hypothesis seeks to test for the influence of ideology on perceptions of the role of government and specific government policies. The second hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Americans who are more conservative will be less favorable of government spending compared to those who are more liberal.

The third hypothesis is most integral to assessing the role an individual citizen's place plays in the minds of American citizens when it comes to perceiving politics. If place matters, then it is expected that people's perceptions of government changes or moderates given their geographic environment. As mentioned previously, liberals are more predisposed to supporting more government spending and involvement, whereas conservatives favor less spending. Like conservatives, rural Americans are less supportive of government involvement and spending compared to urban Americans. Here, the following hypothesis seeks to assess the interaction

between ideology and place and whether place has a significant effect on moderating the perceptions of government across political ideology. For example, it is expected that individuals with an ideology that perhaps stands in stark contrast with the rest of their geographic population, those individuals will have moderated perspectives to "match" with their neighbors and friends. Therefore, the third hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 3: Geography conditions perceptions towards government spending across political ideologies.

Data/Methodology

The first task in examining the influence of place on perceptions of government and policy is to obtain data that measures these concepts and also specifically identifies place as a key independent variable for analysis. Previous national surveys have done an adequate job at tapping into the minds of individuals regarding their beliefs about government and how much/little the government should do for American citizens. For the purposes of this research, the American National Election Survey (ANES) includes measures of geographic location at the county-level and also asks questions that tap into the attitudes of Americans on government policies and the role of government.

The ANES permits scholars to access the geocodes (numeric county identifiers) and zip codes for all respondents to the survey for the years of 1994 through 2012.[2] Using this geographic data allows for an examination over roughly the last twenty years of perceptions towards the role of government and government policy based on where someone lives. The dataset of the geocodes and zip codes correspond to each respondent's case ID in the original ANES dataset, therefore giving each respondent a specific geographic location; however, simply

[2] The geocode data includes respondent's location from 1994-2012; however, for the present analysis, the range of years examined extends from 1994-2008 to include all primary independent and dependent variables.

having geocodes and zip codes is still not adequate to pinpoint whether a respondent lives in a rural, urban, or suburban county in the United States. The National Center for Health Services through the Center for Disease Control has developed Urban-Rural Continuum Codes in order to "study health differences across the urban-rural continuum" (CDC 2017). The approximation of the NCHS urban-rural continuum is appropriate for the analysis as it identifies counties according to their population and separates metro areas from "fringe" metro areas. Areas with significantly smaller populations are considered "non-core" localities or rural areas, located away from other population centers. For the purposes of appropriately assigning these NCHS urban-rural codes, of which there are six, to respondents from the ANES data, the designations are broken into four categories in the dataset, wherein large central metro areas are designated as urban, large fringe metros are designated as suburban, medium metros, small metros, and micropolitan areas are considered "mid-size localities," and "non-core" localities are designated as rural. Most importantly for this paper is the ability to separate out individuals who live in rural areas (non-core in the NCHS data) as the separation from urban locales, regardless of size, may be an important component in explaining attitudes towards the role of government. The NCHS's urban-rural classification scheme has accounted for population changes across each type of geographic area since its inception in 1990. Additionally, the coding scheme has maintained consistency between the last two versions of the data in 2006 and 2013 by accounting for population shifts and changes as well as the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) delineation of geographic areas. The version in 1990 was based on the 1990 census and the OMB's delineation of areas, but did not account for population shifts provided by post-census population estimates of the geographic localities. Table 2.1 shows the geographic breakdown of the respondents in the ANES and NCHS data across urban, suburban, mid-sized, and rural localities.

Table 2.1: Summary Statistics of Geography in ANES and NCHS Dataset

Location	n	Percent
Urban	1,808	29.35
Suburban	1,364	22.14
Mid-Sized Areas	2,564	41.62
Rural	425	6.90
Total	6,161	100

The primary dependent variables are formulated from several questions in the ANES that effectively demonstrate individual preferences towards government intervention and specific policies. To test the aforementioned hypotheses, the questions are primarily ordinal wherein respondents rate their responses in accordance to whether government should have a more active role in providing and spending for particular public services or should have a smaller role. For the subsequent analyses, this research analyzes three questions that examine individual attitudes towards government spending, welfare services, and Social Security. Assessing these attitudes towards welfare and Social Security can indicate whether Americans waver in their support for specific policies compared to their overall feelings about broad government spending and involvement. Percentages of the number of respondents across the primary dependent variables are found in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Summary Statistics of Dependent Variables in ANES and NCHS Dataset

Variables	n	Percent	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Govt. Spending	4,847	100%	0.849	0	2
- Less	1,712	35.3%			
- Same	1,357	28%			
- More	1,778	36.7%			
Welfare	5,203	100%	0.745	0	2
- Less	2,342	45%			
- Same	1,930	37.1%			
- More	931	17.9%			
Soc. Security	5,199	100%	0.595	0	2
- Less	272	5.2%			
- Same	2,116	40.7%			
- More	2,811	54.1%			

In addition to the primary independent variables measuring place, the analysis also includes a control variable for the length of time a respondent has lived in a given area. Also, included in the analysis are control variables that attempt to capture additional factors that can potentially influence perceptions on government spending and policy attitudes. The analysis includes variables for political ideology, gender, race, age, income, and level of education. The analysis also controls for geographic region (South vs. Non-South) in order to ensure that people's place-based perceptions are rooted in their geographic locality while considering the effect of geographic region. Descriptive and summary statistics as well as the coding of the independent variables are found in Table 2.6 in the Appendix.[3]

Analysis

First, in order to assess the general dispositions of individuals regarding the role of government, this analysis utilizes an ordered logistic regression on the how much the

[3] The dataset used here had a total of 17,381 respondents for the years 1994-2012. For the purposes of the analysis, 6,161 respondents were featured in any of the three models, wherein most of those respondents answered all of the questions pertaining to the dependent variables and the independent variables.

government should spend to provide services to the public. This regression will test whether people of different geographic areas want a "big" government or one that is smaller, expressing a desire for lower levels of spending and fewer government services. The dependent variable is coded from 0-2 with 0 representing the response that government should provide fewer services and spend less, 1 representing the response that government should keep spending the same, and 2 representing the response that government should provide more services and spend more. It is also worth examining whether ideology plays a role in the perception of the role and size of government. Having a particular political ideology, whether liberal or conservative, brings to mind notions and ideas about how government should function. The analysis also interacts ideology and geography to examine how individuals of different ideologies from different geographic places perceive their government and whether they are drastically different from their co-residents or become more like-minded based on their place of residence. In the analysis, urban is the omitted category for the ordinal geography variable and liberal is the omitted category for the ordinal ideology variable. The results of the ordered logistic regression analysis are found in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Support for Increased Government Spending on Public Services

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2 (Interaction of Ideology and Geography)
Suburban	0.0394	0.0234
	(0.0792)	(0.153)
Mid-Sized Area	-0.0177	-0.0477
	(0.0722)	(0.142)
Rural	0.0255	-0.789**
	(0.114)	(0.326)
Length of Residency	0.00125	0.00139
	(0.00118)	(0.00118)
Moderate	-0.809***	-0.947***
	(0.0776)	(0.135)
Conservative	-1.577***	-1.580***
	(0.0779)	(0.130)
Black	0.814***	0.818***
	(0.113)	(0.114)
Hispanic	0.405***	0.401***
	(0.102)	(0.103)
Other Race	0.257	0.255
	(0.162)	(0.163)
Gender	0.362***	0.369***
	(0.0565)	(0.0566)
Education	-0.0697**	-0.0716**
	(0.0283)	(0.0283)
Age	-0.00689***	-0.00702***
	(0.00179)	(0.00179)
Income	-0.191***	-0.190***
	(0.0281)	(0.0281)
South	-0.0579	-0.0539
	(0.0656)	(0.0658)
Suburban x Moderate	-	0.0710
		(0.200)
Suburban x Conservative	-	-0.0151
		(0.198)
Mid-Size x Moderate	-	0.199
		(0.180)
Mid-Size x Conservative	-	-0.0985
		(0.177)
Rural x Moderate	-	0.884**
		(0.360)
Rural x Conservative	-	0.963***
		(0.366)

Year: 1996	0.226***	0.234***
	(0.0802)	(0.0804)
Year: 1998	0.604***	0.607***
	(0.0873)	(0.0875)
Year: 2000	0.759***	0.755***
	(0.117)	(0.118)
Year: 2004	0.958***	0.962***
	(0.0931)	(0.0932)
Year: 2008	0.911***	0.914***
	(0.101)	(0.102)
Constant (Cut 1)	-1.883***	-1.930***
	(0.161)	(0.177)
Constant (Cut 2)	-0.507***	-0.551***
	(0.159)	(0.175)
Observations	4,847	4,847

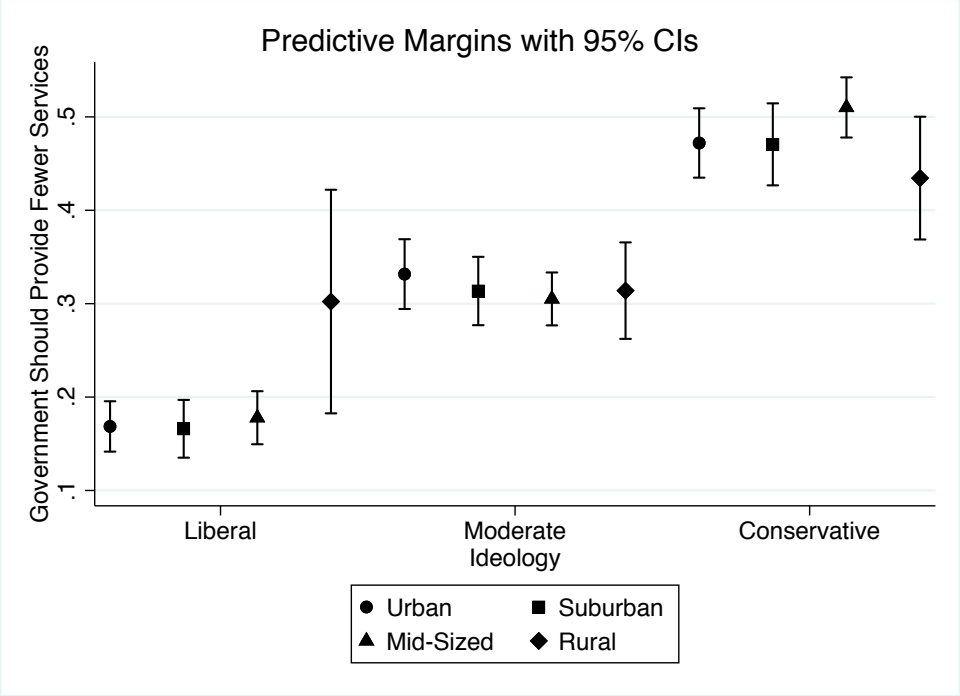
Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Based on the results in Table 2.3, the analyses bears mixed results for the hypotheses. In the non-interactive model (Model 1), the results support the hypothesis that conservatives are less favorable of government spending compared to liberals; however, the models do not provide support for the first hypothesis that rural Americans are less supportive of spending than urban Americans. The analysis demonstrates that control variables move in their expected direction. Minorities were more likely to support government services compared to white respondents. As expected, the older and wealthier respondents were less supportive of government services and spending, further demonstrating that wealthier and older Americans hold more conservative positions on the role of government involvement. More government programs and spending would also require more tax revenue from citizens, thereby placing a higher tax burden onto wealthier Americans.

As it appears that perceptions on government spending is slightly different across political ideologies, especially between liberals and conservatives, it is worth asking how much geography impacts the perceptions on government across ideology. Such a question could better illustrate the link between how place can alter perceptions of government on individuals of

varying political ideologies. The second model in Table 3 includes an interaction between geography and ideology. Here, it is expected that an individual's place will either exacerbate their ideological feelings towards government or will moderate such beliefs (Hypothesis 3). As previous literature has indicated (Cramer 2012; 2016), rural Americans are more prone to support less government involvement. Therefore, the outcome of interest in the marginal effects analysis is the propensity of Americans of different ideologies across geography to desire *less* government involvement through government spending. The results of the interaction are demonstrated by a marginal effects analysis and the results are depicted in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Support for Decreased Government Spending on Public Services



According to the results displayed in Figure 2.1, it becomes clear that liberals from urban, suburban, and mid-sized areas are less likely to believe government should provide fewer services to the public. As expected, conservatives are always less supportive of government

spending across all geographic areas. Still, the most intriguing finding here is that liberals and moderates in rural areas are roughly similar in their perspectives on government spending and the provision of services as rural liberals are nearly 15% more likely to say they would prefer decreased government spending than liberals from other areas. This finding supports the third hypothesis that individuals' opinions and perceptions are moderated by their geographic surroundings and thereby, by living in a particular place may inherently condition or alter one's political perspectives.

The second analysis moves beyond an examination of the role of government and government spending by evaluating individual opinions of the provision of welfare. The provision of welfare has often been a hot-button political issue as it deals with the idea that government can play a large role in assisting the poor with increased spending and the creation of social programs. The dependent variable in this analysis asks respondents whether government spending for welfare programs should be decreased, kept the same, or increased. The variable is coded as 0 for decreased spending, 1 for keeping the amount the same, and 2 for an increased in welfare spending. Similar to the analysis for government spending and the provision of services, this analysis will also incorporate an interaction between ideology and geography to evaluate whether opinions regarding welfare are conditioned or moderated by geography across different political ideologies. The results of the ordered logistic regression analysis are found in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Support for Increased Government Spending on Welfare

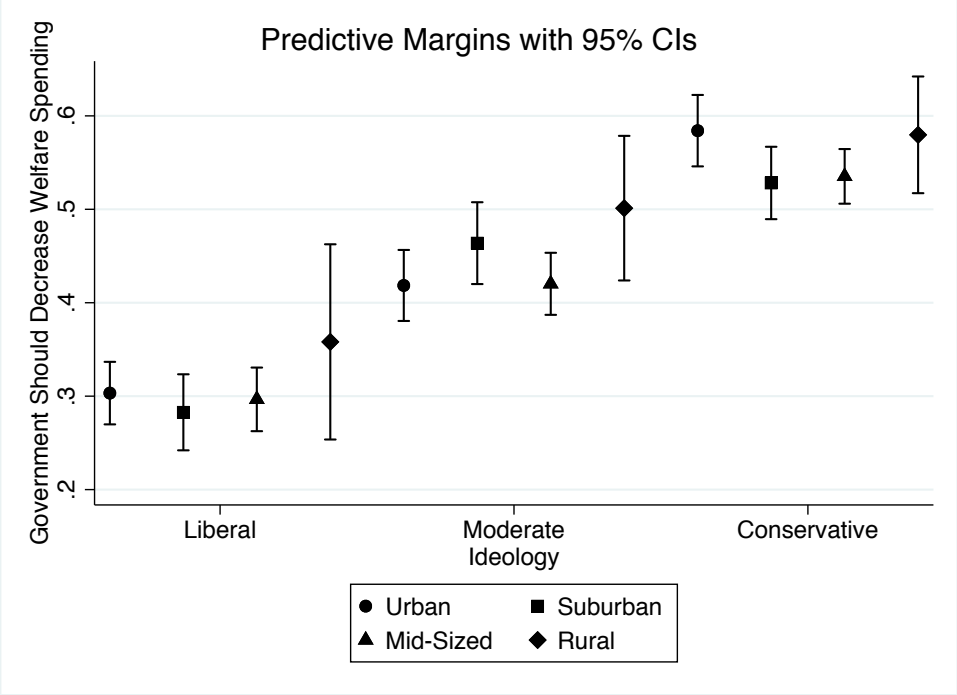
VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2 (Interaction of Ideology and Geography)
Suburban	0.0620	0.108
	(0.0774)	(0.140)
Mid-Sized Areas	0.0906	0.0343
	(0.0691)	(0.123)
Rural	-0.179	-0.274
	(0.119)	(0.272)
Length of Residency	-0.000212	-0.000234
	(0.00119)	(0.00119)
Moderate	-0.657***	-0.556***
	(0.0723)	(0.122)
Conservative	-1.172***	-1.305***
	(0.0712)	(0.126)
Black	0.785***	0.775***
	(0.0963)	(0.0964)
Hispanic	0.378***	0.370***
	(0.0923)	(0.0925)
Other	0.194	0.192
	(0.162)	(0.163)
Female	0.174***	0.180***
	(0.0551)	(0.0553)
Education	0.0275	0.0281
	(0.0274)	(0.0275)
Age	0.00178	0.00176
	(0.00175)	(0.00175)
Income	-0.261***	-0.262***
	(0.0281)	(0.0281)
South	-0.000123	0.00250
	(0.0612)	(0.0613)
Suburban x Moderate	-	-0.314
		(0.191)
Suburban x Conservative	-	0.146
		(0.187)
Mid-Size x Moderate	-	-0.0430
		(0.167)
Mid-Size x Conservative	-	0.188
		(0.165)
Rural x Moderate	-	-0.0993
		(0.332)
Rural x Conservative	-	0.294
		(0.319)
Year: 1996	-0.227***	-0.227***
	(0.0840)	(0.0841)

Year: 2000	0.450***	0.453***
	(0.0986)	(0.0988)
Year: 2004	0.934***	0.936***
	(0.0913)	(0.0918)
Year: 2008	0.959***	0.955***
	(0.0810)	(0.0812)
Cut 1	-0.919***	-0.936***
	(0.156)	(0.166)
Cut 2	1.096***	1.082***
	(0.158)	(0.168)
Observations	5,203	5,203

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

According to the results displayed in Table 2.4, the analyses bears mixed results for the three hypotheses. There were no significant differences between urban and rural Americans in supporting an increase in welfare spending, therefore demonstrating a lack of support for the first hypothesis. Consistent with the results from the first analysis, conservatives were significantly less supportive of spending on welfare compared to liberals from urban areas, supporting the second hypothesis. As in the first analysis, wealthier Americans were less likely to be supportive of increased welfare spending and programs. To test the third hypothesis, this analysis also incorporates ideology with geography to determine whether a person's place moderates opinions towards welfare spending across ideology. The marginal effects analysis demonstrates a similar pattern for rural liberals with the first analysis although with a smaller substantive effect and not statistically significant. As with the first marginal effects analysis, the outcome of interest is the extent to which individuals from the different regions desire *less* welfare spending for the general public. The results of the marginal effects analysis and interaction between ideology and geography are found in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Support for Decreased Government Spending on Welfare



The final analysis focuses on a specific government policy that in some way benefits all Americans: Social Security. By evaluating a specific government policy such as Social Security, this analysis demonstrates how Americans will perceive a policy that has been a consistent form of government exhibiting a larger role in American society. Given that Social Security has been an active government welfare policy for more than 80 years, it can be expected that individuals will view this policy favorably or at least consistently across geographic areas and across political ideologies. Further supporting this logic, a March 2018 poll of 1,945 respondents from the National Opinion Research Center and the Associated Press revealed that 51% of those surveyed claimed that they rely will Social Security either "completely" or "quite a bit" as they get older (NORC Long-Term Care Poll 2018). In the ANES survey, Americans were asked whether Social Security spending should be decreased or cut out entirely, kept the same, or increased. The dependent variable measuring opinions on Social Security spending is coded

from 0-2 with 0 representing the opinion that Social Security spending should be decreased or cut out entirely, 1 representing the opinion that Social Security spending should be kept the same, and 2 representing the opinion that Social Security spending should be increased. In similar fashion to the first two analyses, this analysis also incorporates an interaction between ideology and geography to examine whether place moderates or shifts opinions regarding Social Security across geography and ideology. The results of the ordered logistic regression are found in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Support for Increased Government Spending on Social Security

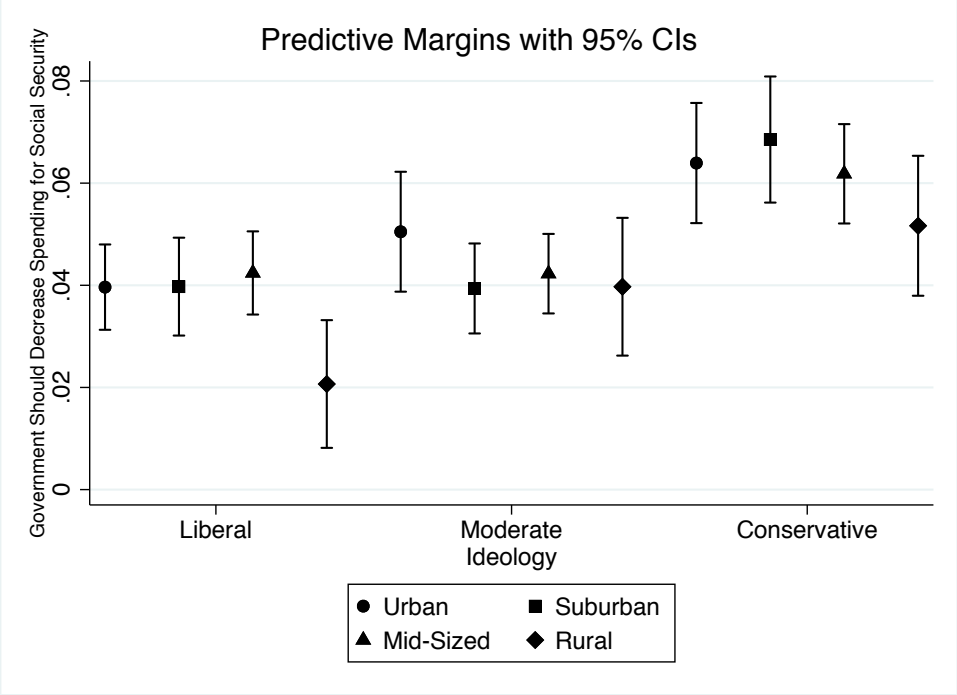
VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2 (Interaction of Ideology and Geography)
Suburban	0.0383	-0.00267
	(0.0826)	(0.153)
Mid-Size	0.0523	-0.0723
	(0.0755)	(0.134)
Rural	0.278**	0.682**
	(0.119)	(0.329)
Length of Residency	0.000713	0.000736
	(0.00122)	(0.00122)
Moderate	-0.109	-0.260*
	(0.0796)	(0.147)
Conservative	-0.514***	-0.518***
	(0.0732)	(0.131)
Black	1.050***	1.060***
	(0.118)	(0.118)
Hispanic	0.496***	0.506***
	(0.102)	(0.102)
Other	0.104	0.107
	(0.164)	(0.164)
Female	0.508***	0.503***
	(0.0582)	(0.0583)
Education	-0.305***	-0.303***
	(0.0282)	(0.0282)
Age	-0.00317*	-0.00304
	(0.00185)	(0.00185)
Income	-0.125***	-0.126***
	(0.0293)	(0.0293)
South	0.0375	0.0314
	(0.0658)	(0.0660)
Suburban x Moderate	-	0.270
		(0.216)
Suburban x Conservative	-	-0.0745
		(0.196)
Mid-Size x Moderate	-	0.263
		(0.190)
Mid-Size x Conservative	-	0.109
		(0.172)
Rural x Moderate	-	-0.424
		(0.387)
Rural x Conservative	-	-0.448
		(0.365)
Year: 1996	-0.229***	-0.227***

	(0.0794)	(0.0796)
Year: 2000	0.697***	0.696***
	(0.105)	(0.105)
Year: 2004	0.623***	0.624***
	(0.0951)	(0.0953)
Year: 2008	0.646***	0.646***
	(0.0865)	(0.0867)
Cut 1	-3.763***	-3.802***
	(0.184)	(0.197)
Cut 2	-0.750***	-0.787***
	(0.165)	(0.180)
Observations	5,199	5,199

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

According to the results in Table 2.5, the results are mixed. From the analysis, it appears that support for Social Security spending is fairly constant and similar across geographic areas; however, here rural Americans are slightly more supportive of increased spending on Social Security and expansion, compared to urban Americans running counter to the logic of the first hypothesis. Still, as evidenced in the first two analyses, ideology still plays a pivotal role in determining attitudes towards Social Security spending with conservatives being less favorable compared to liberals, supporting the second hypothesis. Furthermore, as in the first two analyses, wealthier Americans were less supportive of increased Social Security spending. To determine whether opinions toward Social Security are different across geography and ideology, a marginal effects analysis of the interaction between the two will illustrate any differences. The results of the marginal effects analysis of the interaction are found in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Support for Decreased Spending on Social Security



According to the marginal effects analysis, rural liberals are significantly less likely to favor decreases in spending on Social Security compared to liberals from urban areas. Additionally, rural conservatives appear to be less supportive of Social Security spending than their ideological counterparts from other geographic areas, although the difference is found to be insignificant. Therefore, while there is evidence that rural Americans desire less government spending in general and increases in welfare spending, Social Security, which has benefited Americans across the country for quite some time, is viewed favorably by that group. Perhaps the most important finding here is that for both liberals and conservatives, rural Americans were slightly less likely to favor cuts in Social Security spending, but especially rural liberals. It is possible that rural liberals may look to Social Security not only as a positive government benefit due to their ideological predispositions, but one that helps their friends, neighbors, and their community with whom they share a geographic identity.

Limitations and Considerations

While the findings demonstrate the role of place on perceptions of politics and public policy, this research has some limitations. First, the sample of rural respondents is significantly smaller compared to the other geographic areas. When coding for a respondent's geography using the NCHS coding scheme, I wanted to capture respondents who were the *most* distinctly rural and therefore were not living in micropolitan or scattered suburban areas around a major metro area. In only utilizing one specific classification for rural, I was able to identify those who lived in rural areas that were furthest away from other localities. In order to further understand how politics is viewed, discussed, or different between urban and rural areas, future research will require an emphasis or oversampling of rural areas due to the small sample sizes of rural respondents in existing survey research. Additionally, the data, while appropriate, is only limited to a specific set of years from 1994-2008. Examining a longer period of time would be beneficial to track the development and trends of perceptions on government and public policy across different geographic areas. In doing so, researchers will be able to better understand how the urban-rural division in America has formed across time. Overall, the data did not provide a perfect picture that mirrors the national demographics of geography (where 14% of Americans live in rural areas); however, the data along with the analyses further confirm that the place in which someone lives can have an effect on their perceptions of the role of government.

Conclusion

As seen from previous literature, partisanship, ideology, and race have been significant factors in the development of political attitudes and opinions. This study incorporates the analysis of political geography in order to explain whether the location in which someone lives is also a factor on an individual's perceptions of government and the provision of government services. The research presented here further buttresses the idea that geography can matter in

explaining political attitudes in some situations. The rationale behind this research was not only to demonstrate the value of geography in the study of public opinion, but also to empirically examine the idea that America is divided in two distinct geographic "camps:" urban and rural America. Based on the findings in the empirical analyses, geography can be an influential factor in affecting individual perceptions towards government or specific government policies, especially among a specific group: rural liberals. Individuals in rural areas, especially those who considered themselves liberal and to a lesser degree moderates, demonstrated significant differences in perceptions on the role of government compared to those respondents with the same ideologies in urban and suburban and mid-size areas. Therefore, the viewpoint of liberal Americans from rural areas regarding government is different than that of liberals from other regions.

In conclusion, perceptions on the role of government are more nuanced for liberals from rural communities. Liberals who lived in rural areas were more likely to support decreases in general spending for public services and welfare, thereby demonstrating that geography has a significant influence upon one's political perspectives and can shape their attitudes regarding the role of government. These results indicate that liberals who live in rural areas have their opinions moderated in perhaps an attempt to "blend in" or become more like those within their rural environment. As liberals are in large part "outnumbered" by conservatives in rural America, rural liberals' perceptions of politics may be more "liberal" than their fellow community members, yet they still hold onto the belief that increased government spending and welfare benefits are not benefiting their communities. Still, rural liberals demonstrated a greater level of support for Social Security, leading to the notion that a policy such as Social Security visibly benefits their community as the provision of Social Security benefits are provided to *all* citizens. Whereas, rural liberals may still hold the perception that general government spending

and welfare seem to be benefitting citizens *outside* of their communities. In short, this study illustrates that political perceptions of individuals between urban and rural America are nuanced and the study of rural Americans who consider themselves liberal merits further consideration as this group perhaps has its own distinct perspective of the political world.

CHAPTER III

PLACE-BASED APPEALS AND GEOGRAPHIC IDENTITIES: PERCEPTIONS OF POLITICAL CANDIDATES

In the recent 2018 Nevada gubernatorial election, Republican candidate Adam Laxalt consistently stated his geographic ties to Nevada throughout the campaign. Laxalt attended rallies and fundraisers dressed in work boots and western attire and emphasized his connections with voters across the state. Such behavior is not atypical of a candidate running for governor; however, his own family was not in favor of his appeals to the public about his ties to Nevada and the state's values. Family members claimed that while Laxalt was born in Nevada, he grew up on the east coast, went to a preparatory school in Virginia, and later attended Georgetown Law School, all before coming "home" to run for statewide office (Reno Gazette Journal 2018). Perhaps, others began to catch on to the "overselling" of Laxalt's ties to Nevada, as he lost in his bid to be Nevada's governor. Laxalt's strategy of trying to appeal to voters based on a sense of shared geography or place is not uncommon. It is common for political candidates to emphasize their geographic background through their conversations with voters, advertisements, and their biographies put on mailers and websites. In doing so, candidates attempt to connect their personal lives, characteristics, and personality with voters. As important as political communication is between candidates and prospective voters, it is essential to understand the effects of candidate's biographical information to influence and persuade citizens. While certain buzz words such as "conservative," "progressive," "honesty," and "integrity" paint a picture of a candidate, it is worth considering whether geographical locations can activate an informational

cue for voters as well. Herein, lies the rationale for this research. While voters use cues such as partisanship (Campbell et al. 1960), this research seeks to expand on such evidence by examining how the introduction of a candidate's geographical background alters the way a voter perceives the candidate and subsequently affects their political behavior. Additionally, this research analyzes how place-based identities affect the way in which individuals perceive other individuals from different places. Utilizing a survey experiment of roughly 3,000 Americans, the results demonstrate that when individuals share both the same partisanship *and* geographic background with a political candidate, people are more likely to find that candidate more favorable and believe they will represent them well. Furthermore, when candidates do not share partisanship with citizens but share a common geography, citizens found those candidates *less* favorable than candidates they did not share geography with, leading to the notion that a shared geographic background to candidates of the opposite party, has a negative effect on voter's evaluation of particular candidates. These findings further illustrate the well-understood influence of partisanship on voter perceptions but also show that geography, when working in tandem with partisanship, can be valuable in shaping voter's views of political candidates.

Place-Based Identity and Political Perceptions

In a complex political environment, voters frequently look for ways to gather information with the purpose of using that information to make political decisions, such as voting. Since *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960), it has been widely accepted that partisanship is perhaps the primary informational cue for voters. The partisan labels, Democrat and Republican, eschew myriad characteristics about the type of candidate running in a given election. Consequently, voters attempt to link certain characteristics of candidates to their own feelings or social identities based on partisanship or ideological cues. However, it should also be noted that partisanship is not the only influential factor in affecting political perceptions and behavior.

Previous literature demonstrates that individuals hold dear to their cultural values and subsequently evaluate politics through their social identity with a particular culture or group (Converse 1964; Kinder and Sanders 1996). In doing so, as many do with political parties, individuals relate to others who are perceived to be *closely* aligned with their perspectives and viewpoints.

As such, the geographic construct of place serves as a social identity, wherein people have a "sense of place" or rather a *belonging* to a place or region (Agnew 1987). When people live in place or space for a significant period of time, individuals develop an affinity or shared *closeness* to a location or region (Elazar 1966). Over time, a place fosters a particular culture, or way of life, and beliefs, values, and traditions of a particular place bear considerable influence over the lives of people who live there. Place structures how individuals behave (Pred 1990) and furthermore, individuals are more likely to participate and engage politically when they feel a part of a collective group, in this case a part of a place-based community (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Additionally, group-based identities provide valuable, cognitive information for individuals to best determine their preferences on public policy, in addition to choosing a candidate to support in an election (Zaller 1992; Lupia 1994).

Having a sense of place requires a "psychological sense of attachment" as well as an "informational avenue to connecting the personal to the political" (Conover 1984). With regard to politics and public policy, individuals have their place-based attachment activated when they are able to perceive that some election or policy relates to or impacts their geographic environment or those in their shared geographic community (Hutchins and Stormer 2013; Williams et al. 2010). Consequently, these types of attachments imbue a strong identity related to place and affect the way in which they view their political environment. Individuals use their place-based identity to relate to one another and find a commonality when discussing politics

(Cramer 2012; 2016). More specifically, being a resident of a particular place, as Cramer demonstrates with rural America, can create an in-group and out-group dynamic (Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1986). Furthermore, individuals with strong place-based attachments are likely to judge or perceive individuals based on others' geographic backgrounds.

Place's Influence on Politics and Behavior

While place can create a meaningful attachment to individuals, politics and political behavior is heavily influenced by geography. Place serves as a contextual and integral aspect to the political process, wherein many political discussions and behavior take place in the context of an individual's neighborhood or community (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Lappie and Marschall 2018). As such, place influences the political decisions individuals make in terms of choosing to participate in politics and choosing certain candidates. For example, Key (1949) identifies that residency and proximity are primary factors when individuals determine which candidate to support in an upcoming election. He goes on to argue candidates are able to receive support not solely based on their issue positions, but also based on where they live in a relation to voters. In more recent work, Panagopoulos, Leighley, and Hamel (2017) find that individuals are more likely to turnout and support a candidate who is from a voter's home county As mentioned, the degree to which a candidate can relate to voters is integral to a successful campaign. By relating to individuals of a particular place, candidates begin to look like "one of us" to voters instead of "one of them," leading to the notion that a candidate represents a particular place-based identity and consequently, gaining support from residents of a particular geographic location.

Furthermore, Lewis-Beck and Rice (1983) demonstrate that an individual's likelihood of support for a particular candidate is significantly related to how a particular person's friends and neighbors vote in an election. As such, place generates a contextual political environment which

breeds a common understanding or perception among individuals in a particular area. In short, the identities formulated by living and residing in a particular area influence how individuals generally perceive politics and subsequently affect their behavior when participating in the democratic process.

Place and Perceptions of Political Candidates

The extent to which voters evaluate political candidates has been examined through the lens of partisan and ethnic identities. As mentioned previously, partisan affiliations of individuals are integral when choosing a candidate to support (Campbell et al. 1960; MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 2002). When identities align with a particular candidate, such as along gender, racial, ethnic, or partisan lines, the propensity for a voter to support the candidate increases (Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Stein, Ulbig, and Post 2005). To some extent, voters utilize their own understanding of who they are, in terms of their own identity, to screen political information and evaluate whether a candidate's own identity matches with their own. In consequence, voters who share characteristics with candidates favor those candidates and are more likely to support them in a given election (Adida, Gotltlieb, Kramon, and McLendon 2017). As such, candidates are well-aware of making such connections as they will try to actively make place-based appeals to members of the electorate to maximize their chances of electoral victory (Fenno 1978).

A recent study has specifically demonstrated that place or geographic background provides valuable information in learning about a political candidate, activates voter's identities to a specific place, and subsequently, individuals from urban and rural areas perceive candidates differently based on which geographic appeals were made in a fictitious political ad (Jacobs and Munis 2018). Jacobs and Munis' research similarly seeks to demonstrate the influence of place and geography on perceptions of individuals towards political candidates. In their study,

individuals are exposed to a hypothetical political candidate's advertisement which features a city-scape from the respondent's state (urban) or a rural landscape from the respondent's state. The candidate stands in front of both of the geographic images with the same language used in both types of the advertisement. Jacobs and Munis find that rural respondents perceived the "urban candidate" less favorably and thought the urban candidate was less able to understand the needs and issues of individuals from rural localities (Jacobs and Munis 2018). The aforementioned experiment, however, does not incorporate a candidate's partisanship, therefore this present study seeks to illustrate whether geography matters in the evaluation of a candidate when partisan cues are presented to voters. Additionally, hypothetical advertisements and imagery are not used, but rather biographies are presented to individuals to allow them to make their own inferences about the candidate without a geographic image being present in their minds.

Theory/Hypotheses

As previously discussed, myriad factors shape voter's perceptions on political candidates and their campaigns. Sharing partisanship with political candidates certainly stands as perhaps the most prominent factor in the development of attitudes and feelings towards a particular candidate, as voters hold an attachment to a party, they will subsequently attach themselves (or their vote) to a partisan candidate. Here, I examine if place plays a complementary role in influencing voter's perspectives of political candidates. Perhaps, when a candidate's partisanship and geographic background matches with a voter's partisanship and geography, the individual will show even more favor to the candidates of similar partisanship. Therefore, I hypothesize that place or a candidate's geographic background can affect voter's perceptions *even* when partisan cues are present. Therefore, the first hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis #1A: Individuals are more likely to perceive a candidate more favorably

when a candidate shares the same partisanship.

Hypothesis#1B: Individuals are more likely to perceive a candidate more favorably when a candidate shares the same geographic background.

Hypothesis #1C: Individuals are more likely to perceive a candidate more favorably when a candidate shares the same partisanship and geographic background with a voter.

Additionally, I hypothesize that partisans will evaluate candidates of the opposite party more favorably when they are introduced to a candidate with a similar geographic background to the voter. In other words, a rural Republican may view a rural Democratic candidate more favorably compared or urban Democratic candidate. This idea leads to the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis #2: Individuals are more likely to perceive a candidate of the opposite party more favorably when a candidate from the opposite party shares the same geographic background of a voter.

Additionally, I offer a competing theory to the second hypothesis that individuals will perceive a candidate of the opposite party less favorably even when they share the same geography. I theorize that individuals will look upon the hypothetical candidate less favorably given the candidate is not of the same partisanship as the respondent and is viewed as "not one of us" in the eyes of the respondent. This hypothesis follows the logic of the "in-group vs. out-group" theory wherein individuals perceive others from opposite groups (in this case, partisanship) as "out of place". This idea and proposed theory leads to the third hypothesis:

Hypothesis #3: Individuals are more likely to perceive a candidate of the opposite party less favorably when a candidate from the opposite party shares the same geographic background of a voter.

The three hypotheses seek to illustrate the idea that when place is introduced into the psyche of individuals, they will in turn evaluate the candidates based on their own

predispositions towards a specific geographic region and their own place-based identity in tandem with their partisan identity. As previous literature demonstrates, place is as much of an identity as partisanship is for voters and voters will use that information to make prospective judgments about political candidates. The expectation is that not only does the concept of place weigh significantly in the evaluation of political candidates, but that place can influence electoral outcomes and vote choice even when partisanship is a present informational cue.

Data and Methods

The data used in the analysis comes from a nationwide survey of approximately 3,000 individuals. The survey was put into the field from September 20th to September 21st, 2018 by the Lucid Fulcrum Exchange, an aggregator of survey respondents from a wide variety of sources (Coppock and McClellan 2018).[4] The survey asked a number of questions regarding partisan affiliation, demographics, and geographic background. In other nationwide surveys, rural respondents make up a relatively small portion of the sample. Here, this survey obtained an oversampling of rural respondents in order to better gauge the perceptions of individuals from both urban and rural areas of the country. To account for a respondent's geography, respondents were asked to describe the place they live subjectively on a six point scale ranging from "very urban" to "very rural."[5] A subjective measurement of geography is used to capture how people perceive their geographic environment and subsequently use their perceived sense of place to make judgments and evaluations of political candidates based on the candidate's geographic background. When people perceive that they are from a rural or urban area, it is assumed they

[4] Coppock and McClellan (2018) find that using Lucid's platform provided a sample that was consistent and suitable for use in the social sciences when asking survey questions from previous survey experiments that employed national surveys. Coppock and McClellan replicated previous survey research while using the Lucid Fulcrum Exchange and found the results consistent with the original research's findings.

[5] Survey questions and coding of the variables from the survey are found in the Appendix.

associate their geographic area with their own personal identity and that identity influences their perceptions of other people from either similar or different geographic places. In order to divide the sample between urban and rural, the respondents were collapsed into two categories from the six original subjective responses about geography. Respondents who perceived their geographic area to be "more urban than rural" were categorized as urban and those who perceived their area to be "more rural than urban" were categorized as rural. Table 3.1 demonstrates the breakdown of respondents between urban and rural.

Table 3.1: Summary Statistics of Respondent's Geography for Candidate Experiment

Location	n	Percent
Urban	1,998	66.07
Rural	1,026	33.93
Total	3,024	100

Most importantly for this study, the survey utilized an experiment of a hypothetical gubernatorial candidate. The rationale behind choosing a gubernatorial candidate is rooted in the idea that governors represent *all* parts of the state, both urban and rural areas. The gubernatorial candidate's state is a constant, yet the specific type of place they are from is either urban or rural. In the experiment, respondents were shown a picture of a hypothetical candidate named John Wilson who is running for governor in their state. Wilson is a middle-aged Caucasian male and his picture is featured below in Figure 3.1.[6]

[6] https://www.johnstoncsd.org/news/2017/08/meet-2017-school-board-candidates

Figure 3.1: Hypothetical Gubernatorial Candidate John Wilson

Respondents were shown the image and then given a short biography of the candidate which details whether they are a Democrat or Republican, are from a large city (urban), a small town (rural), or no geographic place, and a brief write up of a few of their generic political ideas and platform. The full candidate biography treatments are found in the Appendix.

Following the presentation of the candidate's picture and biography, respondents were asked how likely they are to vote for the candidate, how well they believe the candidate will represent people like them, and how favorable they find the candidate. The aforementioned questions serve as the dependent variables in the analysis and are scales on how likely respondents are to agree whether they would vote for the candidate, whether they believe the candidate will provide good representation, and whether they find the candidate favorable. The dependent variable measuring candidate favorability is an index of questions that measure whether the impression of the candidate was positive or negative, whether the respondent respects the candidate, whether the respondent trusts the candidate, and whether the candidate

represents their particular political values. Across the four dependent variables, higher values represent a respondent's belief that they are likely to vote for the candidate, they believe they will represent them and their area well, and they find the candidate favorable. Lower values indicate a respondent's belief that they are less likely to vote for the candidate, they believe they will not represent them or their area well, and they find the candidate unfavorable. For the likelihood of voting for the candidate and for general favorability, a value of "3" serves as the median category, indicating the respondent is neither likely nor unlikely to vote for the candidate and the respondent is indifferent in whether they have a positive impression of the candidate. For whether respondents believe the candidate will represent them and their community well, a value of "2" serves as the median category, indicating the respondent believes the candidate will represent them and their community moderately well. Coding of the dependent variables along with summary statistics are found in the Appendix.

The independent variables of interest, co-partisanship and co-geography, are formulated by creating a variable for each where the respondent's partisanship and geography matches with the hypothetical candidate's partisanship and geography. Individuals who did not identify as a Democrat or Republican are dropped from the analysis as they do not match with the candidate's partisanship.[7] The variable for co-partisanship is a dichotomous variable where 1 represents the candidate and respondent share the same partisanship and 0 represents that they do not share the same partisanship. Similarly, the variable for co-geography is an ordinal variable where 2 represents the candidate and respondent share the same geographic background, 1 represents the respondent was not presented with the candidate's geographic background and therefore does not know where the candidate is from, and 0 represents that the candidate and respondent do not share the same geographic background.

[7] 709 respondents identified as "Other" when asked about their partisanship.

In the subsequent analysis, I utilize an analysis of variance (ANOVA test) to compare the mean response of individuals who share or do not share partisanship with the candidate and subsequently, whether they share geography or do not share geography with the candidate. Following each test, I employ a Tukey-Kramer pairwise comparison analysis to demonstrate the significant differences between either sharing or not sharing partisanship and geography with the hypothetical gubernatorial candidate.

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis utilizes an analysis of variance to test whether sharing geography with a candidate influences perceptions of political candidates. The first outcome of interest is whether individuals are likely to vote for the hypothetical gubernatorial candidate. The results of the first analysis are found in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Likelihood of Voting for Gubernatorial Candidate

Difference of Means - Likelihood of Voting for Candidate

Shares Partisanship

	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test
Does Not Share Geography - Does Not Know Geography	4.19-4.29	0.10	1.08
Does Not Share Geography - Shares Geography	4.19-4.32	0.13	1.41
Does Not Know Geography - Shares Geography	4.29-4.32	0.03	0.328

Does Not Share Partisanship

	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test
Does Not Share Geography - Does Not Know Geography	3.10-3.15	0.05	0.64
Does Not Share Geography - Shares Geography	3.10-3.03	0.07	0.824

Does Not Know Geography - Shares Geography	3.15-3.03	0.13	1.47

Based on the results of the analysis, sharing partisanship increases the likelihood of a voter supporting a candidate; however, having a shared geography does not have a significant effect. Co-partisans were consistently more likely than contra-partisans to say they would support the hypothetical candidate. Therefore, this result partially confirms the part of the first hypothesis (1A) that co-partisans are more likely to favor and subsequently support candidates that share their partisan identity. However, the results do not support the second part of the first hypothesis (1B) that individuals will be more supportive of geographically similar candidates when sharing a voter's partisanship. While there was a .125 positive difference in support for the candidate between those co-partisans who did not share geography and those who did, the difference was not significant as confirmed by the Tukey-Kramer comparison. Additionally, the results do not confirm the second hypothesis (2) that individuals who do not share partisanship with the candidate but do share geography with the candidate are more likely to support and vote for the candidate as the difference between the two categories was negative and not significant. However, the negative trend does appear to indicate that contra-partisan candidates are being slightly "punished" by respondents by those who share geography with the candidate, although the difference is not significant.

The second analysis evaluates how individuals believe that the candidate will represent the community in which they live. The results of this analysis are found in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: How Well the Candidate Will Represent Respondent's Community

Difference of Means - Candidate Will Represent Community Well

Shares Partisanship

	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test
Does Not Share Geography - Does Not Know Geography	2.28-2.51	0.23	3.75*
Does Not Share Geography - Shares Geography	2.28-2.49	0.21	3.53*
Does Not Know Geography - Shares Geography	2.51-2.49	0.02	0.239

Does Not Share Partisanship

	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test
Does Not Share Geography - Does Not Know Geography	1.81-1.88	0.07	1.13
Does Not Share Geography - Shares Geography	1.81-1.79	0.02	0.42
Does Not Know Geography - Shares Geography	1.88-1.79	0.09	1.55

According to the results of the analysis, once again co-partisanship was a significant factor in individual's evaluation as to how well the candidate can represent their community. Respondents that shared partisanship and geography with the candidate were significantly more likely to believe that the candidate would represent their community well compared to those who did not share geography with the candidate. The results confirm that co-partisans who shared geography with a candidate are more likely to believe they will represent their community compared to co-partisans who do not share geography with a candidate. Therefore, sharing both geography and partisanship led to a higher evaluation of the candidate in terms of the representation the candidate could provide for the respondent's community. When geography is not shared, respondents were generally more skeptical that the candidate could represent their

community well, given that the candidate is not from the respondent's type of community or geographic area. The results confirm both components of the first hypothesis (1A & 1B); however, the results did not support the second hypothesis that respondents who did not share partisanship but shared geography with the candidate would see the candidate as better representatives of their communities. As to whether contra-partisan candidates were punished by respondents who share the same geography (Hypothesis 3), there is only a slight negative difference (-.03), but is not statistically significant.

The third and final analysis evaluates whether individuals find the candidate more or less favorable. As mentioned, the dependent variable in this analysis is an index which encompasses questions relating to how trustworthy the candidate seems, how well they represent respondent's values, how well they would do as governor, how much the respondent respects the candidate, and how respondents described their initial impression of the candidate. The results of the third analysis are found in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Respondent's Favorability of the Candidate

Difference of Means - Evaluation of Candidate

Shares Partisanship

	Group Means	**Mean Difference**	**TK Test**
Does Not Share Geography - Does Not Know Geography	4.06 - 4.10	0.04	0.599
Does Not Share Geography - Shares Geography	4.06 - 4.11	0.05	0.78
Does Not Know Geography - Shares Geography	4.10 - 4.11	0.01	0.181

Does Not Share Partisanship

	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test
Does Not Share Geography - Does Not Know Geography	3.51-3.50	0.01	0.137
Does Not Share Geography - Shares Geography	3.51-3.33	0.18	2.78
Does Not Know Geography - Shares Geography	3.50-3.33	0.17	2.67

According to the analysis, the results illustrate that co-partisans who share geography with a candidate are no more likely to favor the candidate compared to co-partisans who do not share geography with a candidate. In fact, there are no distinguishable differences between the two. Therefore, the results confirm only the first component of the first hypothesis (1A) that co-partisans find co-partisans more favorable in general, however, co-partisans who shared geography were no different from those who did not, therefore the results did not confirm the second part of the first hypothesis (1B). As in the first two analyses, the results did not support the second hypothesis (2) that respondents who did not share partisanship but shared geography with the candidate would see the candidate more favorably. As for the competing hypothesis to hypothesis 2, respondents viewed opposite party candidates negatively when the candidate shared geography with the respondent, although the substantive difference was not statistically significant. In this scenario, the introduction of a place-based cue actually had a negative influence on a respondent's evaluation of a candidate. Perhaps, this finding further illustrates that people who live in the same areas have a dislike towards their neighbors and fellow residents who are of the opposite political persuasion.

Conclusion

The primary goal of this research is to illustrate the perceptions of individuals from urban and rural America toward a hypothetical gubernatorial candidate. When considering what

factors influence Americans in their evaluation of candidates, it is valuable not only to consider partisan preferences of voters, but also to consider the place in which they live. This research illustrates not only the understood notion that partisanship affects perceptions of candidates, but that place plays a complementary role in such evaluations.

The results of these analyses demonstrate that sharing partisanship with a candidate overwhelmingly influences the likelihood of voting for a candidate, the belief they will represent a community well, and the general favorability of a candidate. Therefore, it is not surprising that candidates will tout their partisanship to activate the partisan identities of voters during an election. When a geographic cue was present to the respondent, they were able to have more information about the gubernatorial candidate that could have affected their evaluations, but this did not seem to significantly affect their overall vote choice even when they shared partisanship with the candidate. This finding demonstrates that partisanship and partisan cues still dominate vote choice of candidates, yet geography appears to influence perceptions of representation. Respondents were significantly less likely to believe that the candidate would do a good job of representing their community when the respondent learned they did not share a similar geographic background with the candidate, compared to when they learned they shared geography with the candidate or did not know the geographic background of the candidate. Perhaps when individuals see that a candidate does not shares a similar geographic background, they have lower expectations in how that candidate will represent them and their values. In other words, individuals may believe that the candidate does not have a better understanding of someone's community since they are not from the same place. Therefore, when respondents learned that the candidate did not share a similar geographic background, they viewed the candidate slightly more negative compared to candidates who shared a common geography with respondents and those who did not have a specific geographic background.

One of the more interesting findings from the analyses is that respondents in the survey tended to view candidates of the opposite party but from the same geographic area, more negatively than candidates who did not come from the same geographic area. Perhaps, the geographic divide seen in present day American politics functions not as an urban versus rural resentment, but rather it is a distrust or disaffection towards those who are politically different from one another in communities across the United States. Originally, this research hypothesized that individuals would find favor with a candidate who was from the same type of community despite a different partisanship. Consequently, the results demonstrated the opposite where they were viewed less favorably across the three analyses. Future research would do well to continue evaluating the influence of place-based identities on the political perceptions of Americans and perhaps better explain why there is a divide towards one's community members who think and believe differently about politics. Once we are able to understand what divides us, only then are we able to bridge that divide towards uniting us.

CHAPTER IV

GEOGRAPHIC IDENTITIES AND SOCIAL DIVISIONS BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL AMERICA

The question "where are you from?" is perhaps one of the most common questions asked of someone when meeting another for the first time. As simple as such a question may be, it provides valuable first impressions when meeting someone new. The individual asking the question is gathering information and subsequently can form perceptions about the other person. Such a question and the response can disseminate cultural and social information by which a person can determine whether they "approve" of such an individual. Since such a place-based question is so prevalent among first encounters between Americans, the implications of how citizens evaluate one another is important to understanding the current social and political climate in the United States.

Americans and individuals in general often form their identities about themselves through group-based identities (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Individuals may be part of various groups, whether religious, political, or social, and consequently develop perceptions of individuals who belong to the same group. On the contrary, individuals who belong to particular groups may view others who are not a part of their particular groups as "outsiders," who hold different values or perspectives (Brown 1986). In politics, this sociological division is common-place between individuals of different political partisanship. Democrats often view Republicans less favorably and vice-versa. As evidenced by the preceding chapter, partisanship significantly affects how individuals perceive political candidates even when they share a common geographic identity.

As a consequence, communities are perhaps becoming more divided along partisan lines. Still, the division between urban and rural America may not just be a "red versus blue" debate, but a social division where individuals from geographic areas perceive individuals different simply based on where they are from or who they are.

The following research examines the identities of individuals from both urban and rural America and how a place-based identity affects perceptions towards individuals from different geographic areas. Using the same survey discussed in the previous chapter along with data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), this research seeks to determine how Americans perceive one another based on three pieces of information: whether they come from an urban or rural area, whether they own a firearm, or whether they recycle. The information is presented in a short survey experiment where respondents are presented with a hypothetical individual and given short statements regarding the aforementioned characteristics. According to the analysis, individuals from rural and urban areas positively evaluate those who come from similar places and have similar characteristics to the respondent's place. Rural Americans favorably evaluate those who come from small towns when they also own a gun. The same trend applies to urban respondents who more positively perceive those from large cities who do not own a gun. Perhaps the most interesting finding is that rural Americans, as well as urban Americans, appear to negatively perceive those who come from similar areas when they learn another individual's gun ownership is not consistent with the conventional gun ownership to that particular area. This finding leads to the idea that a perceived cultural difference between individuals from a similar place can lead to intra-group division even when people share geography.

Social Identity and Inter-Group Behavior

Individuals often make sense of the world around them through joining particular groups

and socially categorizing themselves through group membership (Chi, Feltovich, and Glaser 1981; Medin and Cooley 1998; Wilson 2012). Belonging to a group enhances one's living experience through the shared values, characteristics, and perceptions of the world around them. Membership in a group offers intrinsic value to the individual, who begins to identify with the group and fellow group members. Once they have a better understanding of their "self" through group membership, individuals socially categorize themselves and subsequently, rank themselves and other group members higher in terms of social stratification (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Consequently, they develop a *social identity* where individuals try and maintain a positive self-concept of themselves. Tajfel (1981, 255) defines social identity as: "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that group membership." As such, individuals within particular groups reference their own group in comparison to other groups and hold positive evaluations towards groups or characteristics of those groups that reinforce their social identity (Brown 1986). In addition, individuals who hold a positive social identity to their own group hold negative evaluations towards groups that do not reinforce one's social identity or stands in stark contrast. In some sense, individuals of groups find distinction between a different group ("out-group") from their own group ("in-group"). Central to the biasedness of groups towards their own is rooted in what Cramer (2016) calls "group consciousness." Group members display a sense of pride in who "they are" and consequently, grow resentful of other groups who appear to be better off in comparison to their own group. Therefore, the development of social identity is related to social competition.

Identities are prevalent in American society, especially when it comes to politics (Converse 1964). Understanding politics is costly (Downs 1957), and identities help influence what Americans should pay attention to and how they behave politically. Partisan identities play

a significant role in the development of political attitudes and perceptions (Campbell et al. 1960). Consistent with the logic of social identity theory, when someone identifies as a Democrat or Republican, they tend to perceive the political world with their groups in mind and behave accordingly to their group preferences and values (Green et al. 2002). Consequently, these identities have led to partisan division, as politics has boiled into an "us" versus "them" mentality.

When examining these divisions of social identity, researchers utilize surveys in order to determine the psychological attachments and evaluations of groups (Conover 1984). Surveys and experiments that attempt to capture sociological and political differences between groups often ask questions about particular groups and then assess "feelings" or perceived "closeness" to those groups. Wong (2010) posits that feelings of "closeness" are interrelated with identity as being "closer" to those in a shared space (such as a community) and lead to an "imagined" community of similar values and culture. According to Wong, measuring social identity among individuals in a survey requires asking respondents about their perceived "closeness" towards particular groups, thereby capturing whether respondents feel "closer" to groups who hold shared values and "distant" from those who do not.

Social identities among the American population manifest in many ways. From political partisanship to social status, from race to sports teams, Americans find meaning in being a part of groups. One such identity that applies to every American is an identity based on geography. Place is a common identifier for many Americans. Whether someone is from Georgia or from New York, from a town of 1,000 or from a city of one million, people often use their geographic background to describe themselves. As partisan identities have led to social divisions among the American population, an examination of place-based identities is important to understanding whether social divisions also occur along geographic lines.

Geographic and Place-Based Identities

"Place identity" has been defined as "an interpretation of self that uses environmental meaning to symbolize or situate identity" (Cuba and Hummon 1993, 112). Place identities arise because people form personal, social, and cultural attachments to their geographic environment and reinforce one's personal conception of "who they are." Following the logic of social identity theory, place-based identities lead to different evaluations of the world when "group consciousness" is a factor (Cramer 2016). In other words, the perceptions of individuals are influenced when considering their own geographic group against another. Scholars have noted a "red" versus "blue" division among the geographic regions of the country, which is rooted in the idea that different places are more Democratic/Republican than others. This "red" versus "blue" division is perhaps a product of a social division that exists between urban and rural America, when partisanship is no longer a consideration (Meckler and Chinni 2014).

Examining place-based identities and the divide between urban and rural America requires a better understanding of how people form their attachments to place. Previous research has utilized both survey research, experiments, and interviews to illustrate the place-based divisions among citizens (Wong 2010; Enos 2017; Cramer 2016).

Wong (2010) posits the idea that "communities" are imagined in the minds of individuals and subsequently, forms boundaries from other communities and affects how other communities are perceived. In other words, individuals see their community as a type of group that fosters similar values and beliefs among members (or residents). Wong utilizes a survey where she asks respondents about how closely they feel to the people and the place in which they live. From her analysis, Wong demonstrates that individuals who feel closer to their community are more willing to do things that benefit the people of their community. Yet, she finds that most Americans are unwilling to extend the "boundaries" of their communities when particular groups

do not "appear like them." Additionally, Wong notes that people's perceived communities do not overlap with existing geographic boundaries. In other words, people perceive their communities as their own and distinct from other types of communities. Overall, Wong's research illustrates that stronger community and place-based identities generate positive perceptions of others within their groups.

Other research utilizes social experiments to demonstrate the divisions among people who share a similar geographic "space" (Enos 2017). Enos demonstrates that people's perceptions of others are significantly affected by their perceived "distance," or rather the idea that the further away someone is from the individual, the more "different" they appear. Furthermore, given "space-based" segregation of populations, people are less frequently coming into contact with others who live, look, and think differently. Consequently, when people learn there is a "space" or geographic "gap" between one another, they tend to be uneasy and begin to think of their own groups in comparison to others in an "us" versus "them" dynamic.

Place-based divisions and identities have been examined through the cultural and social divide between urban and rural America (Cramer 2004; Cramer 2016). Cramer illustrates such divisions through both survey research and personal interviews with people from rural Wisconsin (Cramer 2016). In her research, Cramer finds that rural Americans' perceptions of urban Americans lead to "rural resentment." As evidenced by the work of Bell and Gelman, urban areas tend to be wealthier (Bell 1992; Gelman 2009). Consequently, rural Americans harbored resentment towards people from such areas, seeing them as "undeserving" of government benefits, as those from rural areas often expressed the idea that government unfairly distributes money to those in urban areas while rural areas get "left behind". The notion of being "left behind" is echoed by Wuthnow (2018), who claims that rural Americans perceive big cities, specifically Washington D.C., as culturally distant wherein social values are not congruent with

those held by people in small towns across the country.

The idea that urban and rural Americans are divided along social, cultural, and political lines is not new, yet further research is required to reconcile what has been done in explaining such divisions. Building from the aforementioned studies, this research utilizes a survey experiment to evaluate how people view others based on a perceived place-based identity.

Theoretical Expectations/Hypotheses

This research builds on the previous studies of social identity theory and behavioral relations between groups. It is evident that social identities affect perceptions of other groups and an identity based in place is no exception. Individuals join groups because of their shared values and beliefs and consequently, identify as a member of that group. Once an identity is acquired, individuals develop a worldview that is consistent with their identity. Wong demonstrates how individuals across the United States "imagine" their communities and set boundaries for who should benefit from government policies and services (Wong 2010). Therefore, it could be said that "lines are drawn" along geographic identities, wherein individuals who hold a distinct geographic identity perceive people from other communities differently. It is expected that individuals will view individuals more favorably when geography is shared between one individual to another and more negatively when geography is not shared. This leads to the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis #1A: Individuals are more likely to perceive other individuals favorably when they have a shared geographic background.

The logic behind the hypothesis assumes that when citizens hold a particular identity, whether it is partisan, class-based, or in this case, geographic, they may perceive other groups more or less favorably given their own group membership. Therefore, I expect that individuals of a particular geographic group (urban and rural) will evaluate others within their own

geographic group favorably. Additionally, when someone appears different or inconsistent to an individual's geographic group, those people will be evaluated less favorably.

Additionally, I offer a competing hypothesis that sharing geography with someone can sometimes lead to less favorable views towards that person. Individuals may like someone less from their group when they observe the other person has characteristics or views that are incongruent with typical views within the group. While it is expected that individuals will initially be favorable to those who come from a same type of geographic area, additional information such as gun ownership, will create a different image in the minds of individuals. According to the Pew Research service, approximately 46% of adults who live in rural areas say they own a gun, whereas only 19% of adults from urban areas own a gun (Pew Research Center 2017). As gun ownership is not as commonplace among those who live in urban areas, individuals from urban areas may perceive those who come from cities and own guns to be "out-of-place" or "not one of us." Following the same logic, rural individuals may be more favorable towards others from the same area, they may view those who do not own a gun as "different" or "out-of-place" and consequently, not in line with their cultural or political values. This idea leads to the second part of the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis #1B: Individuals are more likely to perceive an individual from the same geographic area less favorably when another individual's gun ownership is inconsistent with the culture of their geographic area.

As much as has been said about the growing division between urban and rural America in terms of political differences, such divisions may manifest socially. Therefore, it is expected that individuals may be less likely to socialize or interact with individuals from different geographic regions. Perhaps, such behavior occurs due to a perceived difference in values or group identity. Consequently, the red-rural vs. blue-urban, debate may come down to the lack of interaction with

others who share different views and perspectives of the world and political climate. Perhaps, even creating an echo chamber among individuals within geographic localities who then have their political and social ideas reinforced, rather than challenged. This logic leads to the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis #2A: Individuals are more willing to want to socially interact with others when they have a shared geographic background.

As with the first hypothesis, I also offer another competing hypothesis that individuals will be less likely to socially interact with other individuals who come from the same geographic area, but whose gun ownership is inconsistent with that geographic location. Therefore, I offer a secondary hypothesis:

Hypothesis #2B: Individuals are less willing to socially interact with others when another individual's gun ownership is inconsistent with the culture of their geographic area.

As mentioned, individuals join groups due to similar perceptions of the world around them and shared values. Groups are not inherently homogenous in terms of their demographic composition, yet often share similar ideas and hold distinct cultural values. Values can be defined as a standard for discerning what is good (or bad) for society at large. For example, some Republicans hold values that government should not restrict gun rights or promote gun control in order to provide safety and protection in society. Similarly, holding a particular geographic identity may foster deeply held values. It is expected that individuals who share a similar group identity with others will perceive those individuals to hold similar values consistent with their own. As such, individuals may form particular opinions and perceptions of others when provided with basic information. When learning of someone's specific geographic background, individuals may perceive them to hold certain political beliefs or a particular ideology. As evidenced by contemporary Election Day maps, rural areas and small towns tend

to be dominated by Republicans and conservatives and large cities and urban areas tend to be electoral strongholds for Democrats and liberals. Therefore, it is theorized that individuals use place-based information in determining the political ideology of another person. Therefore, the third hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis #3A: Individuals will perceive another person to be more conservative when they learn that the other person is from a small town or rural area.

Hypothesis #3B: Individuals will perceive another person to be more liberal when they learn that the other person is from a large city or an urban area.

Overall, this research seeks to examine whether individuals will evaluate others differently when place-based information is present. As previously discussed, place is utilized as a contextual, informational cue that individuals utilize to evaluate not only others, but reinforce their own particular group identity. The expectation is that individuals will be largely more favorable towards their fellow geographic group members and, consequently, hold less favorable perceptions towards those who do not share a similar geographic background or similar group characteristics.

Data and Methods

This study utilizes data from the same nationwide survey used in the preceding chapter. To measure respondent's geography, I utilize the same variable from Chapter 3, wherein respondents were asked to subjectively describe the place they live. For this analysis, I break the variable down into three categories based on respondent's approximation of their geographic environment. In the previous chapter, geography was broken down into two categories: "urban" and "rural;" however, here I break down geography into "urban," "rural," and respondents who described their location as either "somewhat more urban than rural" and "somewhat more rural than urban". By separating the variable into these three components, the respondents' subjective

evaluations demonstrate how they perceive the place in which they live and will subsequently use such perceptions to evaluate others from places that are similar or dissimilar to their own. Not all places can be neatly categorized as urban or rural, therefore the third category of respondents who perceive their place as somewhat urban or somewhat rural serves as a median category when comparing the differences between urban and rural respondents in their evaluations of a hypothetical individual. Table 4.1 shows the geographic categories of respondents used in the subsequent analyses:

Table 4.1: Summary Statistics of Respondent's Geography for Citizen Experiment

Location	n	Percent
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural	1,005	33.23
Rural	593	19.61
Urban	1,426	47.16
Total	3,024	100

As mentioned, this study utilizes a survey experiment featuring a hypothetical citizen in which respondents are asked to evaluate the person based on three pieces of information about the hypothetical person. In the experiment, respondents were given the prompt: "Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them..." Respondents were provided a short statement about the hypothetical person that described whether the person was from a small town (rural), large city (urban), or no geographic place, whether they recycled or did not recycle, and whether they owned a handgun or did not own a handgun. The twelve conditions were randomly assigned and presented to respondents. The exact wording of the conditions is found in the Appendix.

After being presented the information about the hypothetical individual, respondents were asked whether they had a positive impression of the individual, whether they believed the

person to be responsible, whether they respected the individual, whether they wanted to socially interact with the individual, and whether they believed the individual was more liberal or conservative. These questions serve as the primary dependent variables in the analysis and are coded on scales ranging from 0 to 6. As the questions about positive impression, respect, and responsibility are similar in assessing the overall favorability of the hypothetical individual, those questions are used to create a favorability index. For the dependent variables on favorability and social interaction, higher values are associated with higher levels of agreement or positive evaluations. Lower values demonstrate that the respondent did not agree with the statements about the hypothetical individual or negative evaluations. A value of 3 indicates that respondents are indifferent whether they have a positive impression of the person or they are willing to interact with the person. The dependent variable of the hypothetical individual's perceived ideology is scaled from 0-4 where lower values indicate a more conservative ideology and higher values indicate a more liberal ideology. Coding of the dependent variables along with the summary statistics are found in the Appendix.

Of the twelve experimental conditions, this research focuses specifically on a few distinct conditions. In the analyses, I examine how respondents from urban, rural, and mixed (somewhat urban/somewhat rural) areas evaluate a hypothetical individual from a small town or large city. The inclusion of whether the hypothetical person recycles serves as a benchmark for the respondent's overall evaluation. It is assumed that when a respondent sees that another person recycles, they judge the other person to be a better citizen and acting as a good steward of society. Consequently, evaluations are expected to be lower when respondents are presented with a person who does not recycle consistently across the other conditions. The inclusion of information about gun ownership can potentially affect perceptions of individuals given how contentious the debate over gun rights is in the current political climate. Therefore, the analyses

examine how respondents of their respective geographic location perceive a hypothetical person based on their geography *and* whether or not they own a firearm.

The analyses and tests of the aforementioned theories are conducted using an analysis of variance (ANOVA test) to compare the mean response of respondents towards the hypothetical individual presented in the experiment. Following the initial test of the means, the analysis utilizes a Tukey-Kramer pairwise comparison test to assess the significance of the differences between geographic groups of respondents in their evaluations of the hypothetical person. Additionally, I am able to conduct the analysis using a second data set from the 2018 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). The CCES is a large nationwide survey administered by YouGov (CCES 2018). The CCES data used in this analysis is a component of the team content data from the department of political science at the University of Mississippi (Dowling 2018). One-thousand respondents from the larger CCES survey answered the team content battery of questions. As with the original survey analysis, the variables from the CCES are coded in the same manner for consistency and to acquire an accurate measure of robustness of the original findings.

Analysis/Discussion

The subsequent analyses measure differences in responses of survey respondents towards the hypothetical person presented in the experiment. Each table includes the difference of means and the Tukey-Kramer comparisons from both the Lucid survey data and the CCES data. The first analysis examines how favorably respondents perceive other individuals based on their geographic background along with whether or not they own a gun. Here, it is expected that survey respondents will be more favorable in their evaluations of the individual presented in the experiment when they come from a similar geographic place. The results are found in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Favorable Evaluation of the Individual

	Lucid Survey			CCES Survey		
No Place Given and Owns Gun	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	3.33 - 3.50	0.17	1.3	3.53 - 3.82	0.28	1.38
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	3.33 - 2.98	0.34	3.46*	3.53 - 3.23	0.30	1.84
Rural - Urban	3.50 - 2.98	0.52	4.07*	3.82 - 3.23	0.59	3.04
Person is from a Small Town and Owns Gun						
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	3.43 - 3.89	0.46	3.43*	3.47 - 4.04	0.57	2.91
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	3.43 - 3.45	0.02	0.20	3.47 - 3.56	0.09	0.52
Rural - Urban	3.89 - 3.45	0.44	3.53*	4.04 - 3.56	0.48	2.38
Person is from a Large City and Owns Gun						
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	3.18 - 3.50	0.32	2.59	3.33 - 4.14	0.81	3.93*
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	3.18 - 3.18	0	0.03	3.33 - 3.76	0.43	2.66
Rural - Urban	3.50 - 3.18	0.32	2.78	4.14 - 3.76	0.38	1.80

	Lucid Survey			CCES Survey		
No Place Given and Does Not Own A Gun	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	3.48 - 3.70	0.21	1.72	3.67 - 3.64	0.02	0.12
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	3.48 - 3.62	0.14	1.4	3.67 - 3.78	0.11	0.71
Rural - Urban	3.70 - 3.62	0.07	0.61	3.64 - 3.78	0.14	0.67
Person is from a Small Town and Does Not Own A Gun						
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	3.46 - 3.43	0.03	0.23	3.98 - 4.30	0.33	1.42
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	3.46 - 3.62	0.16	1.61	3.98 - 3.84	0.14	0.81
Rural - Urban	3.43 - 3.62	0.19	1.6	4.30 - 3.84	0.47	2.16

Person is from a Large City and Does Not Own A Gun						
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	3.51 - 3.42	0.09	0.74	3.96 - 3.58	0.38	1.95
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	3.51 - 3.79	0.28	2.69	3.96 - 3.81	0.15	0.86
Rural – Urban	3.42 - 3.79	0.37	3.09	3.58 - 3.81	0.23	1.20

According to the results in Table 4.2, respondents from rural areas were more favorable towards individuals who came from small towns and owned guns compared to urban respondents. Additionally, rural respondents evaluated the hypothetical individual favorably when they did not know where they were from, but the individual owned a gun compared to urban respondents. This finding illustrates some limited support for the first hypothesis (1A), as rural respondents did perceive a person from a small town more favorably compared to urban respondents; however, it is clear that the introduction of gun ownership influences social perceptions of others. The average evaluation of rural respondents who were presented a small-town gun owner was approximately .44 more compared to urban respondents; however, when rural respondents were presented a small-town individual who did not own a gun, their evaluations were .19 less compared to urban respondents although the difference was not significant. From the CCES data, rural respondents found the hypothetical individual more favorable than those from mixed areas, when the hypothetical person came from a large city and owned a gun. Additionally, rural respondents found an individual from a small town who did not own a gun to be more favorable than urban respondents; however, the difference between the two groups was not significant. Urban respondents were more favorable than rural respondents towards individuals who came from a large city and did not own a gun and were less favorable towards individuals who came from a large city and did own a gun, although there was not a significant difference between the two groups. Overall, the results suggest more support for the competing hypothesis (1B) about gun ownership and cultural values. When the hypothetical individual's gun ownership stands in contrast with their geographic area, respondents from the same geographic area are less favorable towards that person, perhaps exposing a cultural difference and leading to a division within geographic areas, rather than between areas.

The second analysis examines whether respondents would be willing to socially interact

with the hypothetical person. It is expected that shared geography between the respondent and the hypothetical individual presented in the experiment will lead to a greater willingness to socially interact. The results of the analysis are found in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Willingness to Socially Interact with Individual

	Lucid Survey			CCES Survey		
No Place Given and Owns Gun	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	3.18 - 3.31	0.13	0.91	3.26 - 3.77	0.51	2.38
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	3.18 - 2.79	0.38	3.59*	3.26 - 3.1	0.16	0.9
Rural - Urban	3.31 - 2.79	0.52	3.76*	3.77 - 3.1	0.67	3.29
Person is from a Small Town and Owns Gun						
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	3.19 - 3.68	0.49	3.37*	3.53 - 4.06	0.53	2.55
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	3.19 - 3.4	0.21	1.87	3.53 - 3.4	0.13	0.7
Rural - Urban	3.68 - 3.4	0.28	2.07	4.06 - 3.4	0.66	3.12
Person is from a Large City and Owns Gun						
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	3.11 - 3.43	0.32	2.37	3.14 - 3.96	0.82	3.78*
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	3.11 - 3.13	0.02	0.19	3.14 - 3.58	0.44	2.54
Rural - Urban	3.43 - 3.13	0.3	2.4	3.96 - 3.58	0.38	1.73

	Lucid Survey			CCES Survey		
No Place Given and Does Not Own A Gun	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	3.30 - 3.56	0.26	1.91	3.58 - 3.56	0.02	0.1
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	3.30 - 3.51	0.21	1.95	3.58 - 3.82	0.24	1.43
Rural - Urban	3.56 - 3.51	0.05	0.35	3.56 - 3.82	0.26	1.21
Person is from a Small Town and Does Not Own A Gun						
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	3.45 - 3.34	0.11	0.79	3.91 - 4.17	0.26	1.09
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	3.45 - 3.73	0.28	2.56	3.91 - 3.45	0.46	2.51
Rural - Urban	3.34 - 3.73	0.39	3.01	4.17 - 3.45	0.73	3.17

Person is from a Large City and Does Not Own A Gun						
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	3.53 - 3.34	0.19	1.45	3.91 - 3.41	0.5	2.42
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	3.53 - 3.84	0.31	2.72	3.91 - 3.75	0.16	0.88
Rural - Urban	3.34 - 3.84	0.5	3.85*	3.41 - 3.75	0.34	1.67

According to the results in Table 4.3, it appears that rural respondents were more willing to interact with those who owned a gun compared to urban respondents across the three conditions of the hypothetical individual's geographic background. When the hypothetical individual presented did not have any place-based information, but they owned a gun, rural respondents were more willing to say they would socially interact with that person than urban respondents. Urban respondents were less willing to interact with that type of individual compared to respondents who came from mixed areas. Rural individuals were also more inclined to socially interact with the hypothetical person compared to respondents from mixed areas, when the individual came from a small town and owned a gun. Urban individuals were more likely to say they would want to socially interact with the hypothetical person who came from a large city and did not own a gun compared to respondents from rural areas. In the CCES analysis, rural respondents were more willing to interact with an individual who came from a large city and owned a gun, compared to those who came from mixed areas. When the individual presented came from a large city and did not own a gun, urban respondents were more willing to interact with that individual compared to rural respondents. As in the first analysis, respondents were less willing to interact with someone from a similar geographic area when the other individual's gun ownership was inconsistent with the respondent's geographic location, indicating support for Hypothesis 2B.[8] While the differences were not significant between rural and urban respondents across each condition, the patterns are consistent with the previous analysis examining general favorability towards the hypothetical individual. The results bear limited support for the hypothesis that individuals are more willing to socially interact with an individual who shares a similar geographic background. Overall, it appears that when another

[8] In the CCES analysis, rural respondents did demonstrate a willingness to interact with an individual who came from a small town and did not own a gun compared to urban respondents; however, the difference was not significant.

person does not "appear" like someone from a respondent's geographic area, respondents are hesitant to say they would like to interact with that person, further demonstrating intra-group division within urban and rural communities.

The third analysis examines how respondents evaluate the hypothetical individual's political ideology based on their geographic background and gun ownership. Here, it is expected that individuals will perceive those who come from a small town and who own a gun to be more conservative and those who come from a large city and do not own a gun to be more liberal. The results from the analysis are found in Table 4.4.[9]

[9] The question asked about perceived ideology of the hypothetical person was included the Lucid survey, but not included in the CCES survey.

Table 4.4: Perceived Political Ideology of the Individual

	Lucid Survey		
No Place Given and Owns Gun	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	1.67 - 1.43	0.24	2.55
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	1.67 - 1.60	0.07	0.99
Rural - Urban	1.43 – 1.60	0.17	1.92
Person is from a Small Town and Owns Gun			
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	1.46 – 1.55	0.09	0.94
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	1.46 – 1.57	0.11	1.48
Rural - Urban	1.55 – 1.57	0.02	0.23
Person is from a Large City and Owns Gun			
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	1.73 – 1.67	0.06	0.73
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	1.73 – 1.62	0.11	1.55
Rural - Urban	1.67 – 1.62	0.05	0.60

	Lucid Survey		
No Place Given and Does Not Own A Gun	Group Means	Mean Difference	TK Test
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	2.18 - 2.03	0.15	1.75
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	2.18 – 1.98	0.20	2.85
Rural - Urban	2.03 – 1.98	0.05	0.56
Person is from a Small Town and Does Not Own A Gun			
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	1.99 - 2.06	0.07	0.74
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	1.99 – 1.77	0.23	3.14
Rural - Urban	2.06 – 1.77	0.29	3.45*

Person is from a Large City and Does Not Own A Gun			
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Rural	2.19 - 2.21	0.02	0.24
Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural - Urban	2.19 – 1.86	0.33	4.50*
Rural - Urban	2.21 – 1.86	0.35	4.13*

According to the results presented in Table 4.4, it appears that place-based information was only marginally influential on respondent's perceptions on the ideology of the hypothetical individual. There were no significant differences between urban and rural respondents when presented a hypothetical individual who owned a gun. For the most part, rural and urban respondents perceived such an individual as conservative across all variations of geography. When the respondents saw the hypothetical individual did not own a gun, there were some significant differences in perceptions of ideology between urban rural respondents. Rural respondents perceived a person from a small town who did not own a gun as moderate, whereas urban respondents viewed that person as conservative. Rural respondents also perceived a person from a large city who did not own a gun as moderate yet trending towards being considered liberal. Overall, there is mixed support for the hypothesis that respondents found small town/gun owners to be more conservative; however, rural respondents did perceive small town individuals as moderate when they did not own a gun. Consistent with the previous two analyses, it is apparent that place-based information plays some role in individual perceptions toward other people; however, the introduction of information about gun ownership provides context to who someone really is.

Conclusion

When being introduced to someone for the first time, individuals quickly take in information about someone and utilize what little they know to form an evaluation. In this study, respondents demonstrated that they find others more favorable when they come from a similar place, but also possess characteristics that are consistent with the geographic region they are from. Rural respondents were more likely to positively evaluate others when they came from a similar geographic area and when the person owned a gun. Additionally, rural respondents

became skeptical of the other individual when they learned they were from the same type of place, but did not own a gun. These findings indicate that simply being from the same place does not lead to an "acceptance" that they are from the same geographic group or share a similar cultural identity. In a similar fashion, urban respondents were more likely to positively evaluate those individuals that came from large cities and did not own a gun, and negatively evaluate those individuals who came from cities, but did own a gun. The same patterns applied to a willingness to engage in social interaction. Rural respondents were more willing to interact with someone who owned a gun regardless of where they lived, and urban respondents were less likely. When it comes to evaluating political views and ideologies, rural respondents found an individual from a similar geographic place to be moderate when they did not own a gun compared to urban respondents who found such a person to be conservative.

The results from the analyses demonstrates that individuals from both urban and rural America are more socially accepting of those who "look more like them" in terms of geographic and cultural similarities. Consequently, when someone appears to be "out-of-place" or in this case, possess a characteristic that is uncommon with a particular geographic area, the individual is examined with greater scrutiny by those from urban and rural areas. At the core of Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory is the idea that individuals within groups have a shared common identity with others in their group, yet individuals compare themselves to those outside of their groups ("out-groups") as well as within their own groups.

In conclusion, this study indicates that place-based information about someone clues people into the type of person they encounter. Still, that information alone does not lead to an immediate positive evaluation. Instead, knowing whether someone "fits" into a specific place-based group, will lead to the truest evaluation about another individual. In this case, someone

who did not own a gun but came from a rural area, looked "different" than those commonly found in rural America. The same can be said of those who came from an urban area and did own a gun. In these cases, an individual's place-based social identity comes into conflict with the individual and leads to the perception that such a person is not "part of the group" and is an "outsider." As such, while there are apparent divisions between urban and rural America, there are divisions that manifest within communities along political and social lines. Perhaps, such divisions lead to political sorting along geographic lines (liberals moving to cities; conservatives moving to the country) that further exacerbates the urban-rural division that is prevalent in American society.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

When Adam Laxalt ran for Governor of Nevada in 2018, he touted his geographic ties to Nevada, the state he left when he was a young man to attend preparatory school in Virginia and later Georgetown Law School. Laxalt returned to run for Attorney General and was elected in 2014. After serving a full term, Laxalt launched a bid for Governor of Nevada and hosted events across the state, where he often discussed how he had a deep connection to the state. One such event, the "Basque Fry," was held in Gardnerville, Nevada, a rural town in western Nevada. Donning western attire, work boots, and jeans, Laxalt stood on a stage in front of a large orange tractor. Laxalt's relatives came out in opposition to Laxalt's campaign and called out Laxalt for projecting an inauthentic image of who he was, claiming that he was not really from Nevada and that his projection of a western image was far from the truth. Laxalt lost his bid for Nevada's governor in November, perhaps due in part to his false claims about his geographic ties to the state. It is possible that voters may have thought about their own geographic identities and were unable to find a connection with Laxalt. This story demonstrates that geography may play in to the minds of Americans when evaluating and perceiving politics. A person's geographic place could be viewed as an identity and subsequently, lead to nuanced perceptions of politics.

The research presented in the preceding chapters can be viewed as a starting point, rather than a conclusion to the study of place and its influence on political views and perceptions. At its conception, this dissertation sought to examine how the place where someone lives potentially

influences perceptions on government, political candidates, and citizens with different geographic backgrounds. Overall, there is limited yet suggestive support for my theoretical expectations and consequently, it opens the door for future considerations in the pursuit of understanding the role of place in politics and political behavior.

Previous research of the role of place in politics highlights how rural Americans tend to be more conservative in an ideological sense (Cramer 2016). Furthermore, these groups of citizens appear to be resentful of those from urban areas and those who hold cultural values they find distinct from people from other geographic areas (Cramer 2016; Wuthnow 2018). As I found this research intriguing, I sought to explain the division between urban and rural America as a byproduct of this cultural division which subsequently, plays into social identities based on a person's geography. From the outset, I expected people from different areas of the country to have divergent perceptions on the role of government based on the place where they live. Furthermore, I expected that individuals perceive one another differently when place-based information is presented to them in both a political and social context.

Recap of Findings

In chapter two, I study whether place moderates or conditions individual attitudes towards the role of government. The findings suggest that ideology (liberal and conservative) does influence how people perceive government and the provision of policies such as welfare and Social Security. Consistent with my expectations, a person's geographic environment does have a conditioning or moderating effect on how they perceive the role of government. This effect appears to be most significant for rural liberals. Liberals who live in rural areas are less supportive of government spending in general compared to their liberal counterparts living in urban areas. Additionally, rural liberals are less supportive of welfare spending; yet, they appear

to be more supportive of Social Security than liberals from urban areas. In short, these findings suggest that rural liberals begin to look more like moderates compared to liberals from urban areas. It's possible that their conception of liberal is more conservative and subsequently, leads to more moderate perspectives on the role of government.

In chapter three, I examine whether place-based information about political candidates affects people's evaluations of those candidates. Given that people often evaluate candidates when partisan cues are present (Campbell et al. 1960), I study the additive effects of geographic information on individual evaluations of political candidates. The analyses suggest that when people do not share geography with a political candidate, they were less likely to think the candidate would better represent them and their respective areas. Furthermore, the results suggest that individuals find candidates to be less favorable when they shared geography, but did not share partisanship. Although this finding was not significant, it leads to the notion that people negatively evaluate those who "look differently" from those in their geographic area. In some way, they could be viewed as a traitor, or someone who does not share the same type of identity and values with those of a particular geographic location. The results of the study illustrate that place-based information does have a slight effect in the evaluations of political candidates.

Chapter four studies the way in which individuals perceive other citizens when they are presented information about them. Using a similar experiment to the one utilized in chapter three, individuals were asked to evaluate a hypothetical person based on where they are from, their gun ownership, and their recycling practices. The analyses suggest that a respondent is more likely to favorably evaluate an individual who comes from a similar geographic place to their own; especially, when they learn about the person's gun ownership. When the hypothetical

individual's gun ownership is conventional with the area they are from, respondents were more likely to have a positive impression of the person. When the hypothetical individual's gun ownership is unconventional, respondents had less positive impressions. Consequently, the same patterns applied to the willingness to socially interact with the individual. Overall, the results suggest that when others do not look similar to people from a respondent's geographic area, they are less willing to say they like the person and would be willing to interact with them.

Limitations and Future Considerations

Considering the results found in the preceding chapters, there is only limited support for the idea that place influences people's views in political and social contexts. Furthermore, the notion that place-based identities are a driving force behind political evaluations is merely suggestive and not definitive based on this research. Place may only play a secondary role in the development of attitudes and perceptions behind other concepts such as partisanship. Still, the results are suggestive that geographic information about political candidates' and ordinary citizens' is important for individual judgments and evaluations.

A major limitation of this research is based on how the tests regarding place's influence are conducted. The two experiments were set up in a way that may not capture the truest effect of place. The analyses primarily focused on simply how someone's geographic location can affect their perceptions, instead of going into the nuances of place-based identity. In the preceding chapters, I consider how people subjectively view the place in which they live which captures their perception or sense of place. What was not considered was the strength of how respondents felt about where they live. The influence of place-based identities may vary by individuals due in part to the strength of attachment they have to where they live. Future research should assess the strength of such identities and whether stronger attachments to place

are influential. While the survey did ask respondents how *closely* they felt to their community, that does not necessarily capture how *strong* one's identity to place actually may be.

As mentioned, apart from the analysis in chapter two, the survey experiments consider subjective measures of place rather than objective measures. People can say they come from an urban or rural area, but they may have different conceptions of what is *actually* urban and rural. The subjective measures utilized in this research only ask perceptions of where they live. For future research, it may be better to ask about specific places in order to capture a better definition of how people subjectively perceive place. For example, asking an open-ended question about large cities or small towns will provide contextual information about how people perceive not only the type of place they live, but other types of places. Asking respondents to subjectively assess the place in which they live leads to a very broad definition of place and additionally, exposes them to the broad conception of place attributed to the hypothetical candidates and individuals in the experiments may not lead to an accurate understanding of where those individuals are *actually* from. Perhaps then, objective measures are potentially more useful in determining how place influences people's political and social views. Therefore, knowing where people actually are from in conjunction with where they *think* they are from could give more external validity to the study of place and its influence on political perceptions. Additionally, it is also worth considering how long people have lived in a particular place given they may be more entrenched in the culture of their geographic area when they have lived there longer. In future research, asking respondents how long they have lived in an area could serve as an additional objective measurement of place-based identity. A variable measuring length of time could consequently be interacted with other factors in future analyses to determine whether those who live longer hold stronger perceptions towards government policies, political candidates, or

other citizens.

In regard to the survey experiments, this research conducts conservative tests to evaluate and understand the role place has in their evaluations of the hypothetical candidates and people. The hypotheticals presented to the respondents were perhaps overly broad and the accuracy of the respondent's evaluations could be diminished without more specific and "real" presentations of candidates and individuals. For example, in the third chapter, asking respondents to evaluate a rural Democratic candidate leads them to think first of their opinions of Democrats and then make a judgment about what they think about rural places. Both descriptions are broad concepts and more specificity is required to have them accurately assess the candidate. In order to better capture the role place may have in such evaluations, another experiment could be set up that features a candidate who comes from an actual city or town in the respondent's state. Therefore, a respondent who comes from Iowa County in Wisconsin could be asked to evaluate a gubernatorial candidate who is either a "Democrat from Milwaukee" or a "Democrat from Mineral Point."[10] In this way, respondents who come from different states can have a reference point to an objective conception of urban and rural based on a specific identification of place. The same set up could apply to the experiment in chapter four where respondents are presented an individual from a specific place from the respondent's state or county. Granted, in order to do this, I must consider idiosyncrasies or preconceived notions that can be associated with certain cities or towns in the minds of individuals. One way to do that is to consider the region in which the respondent comes from as geographic conceptions of urban and rural are likely to be objectively similar within regions. For example, people may perceive areas to be urban and rural

[10] Milwaukee, Wisconsin is the largest city in the state of Wisconsin, therefore the most "urban" place in the state. Mineral Point, Wisconsin is a town of approximately 2,847 citizens located in Iowa County, which is one of the more rural types of places according to the NCHS county data.

based on region where they live. For people who live in North Dakota, Fargo is perceived as urban, whereas someone from New York thinks of urban areas relative to New York City. Geography is likely to be similar across regions and distinct from other regions of the country. In future analyses, it would prudent to ask about perceptions of regions as well as controlling for the region of the country the respondent is from. In the second chapter, I did control for the region of respondent; however, I did not find any differences between urban and rural individuals on their perceptions regarding the role of government. As I did not find any differences, I contend that future analyses should study whether place-based considerations are more or less influential in different regions of the country.

The aforementioned considerations would put a greater emphasis on how place is best measured in the research of place-based influence. Originally, utilizing subjective measures was rooted in the idea that people identify their place with what they immediately perceive about the place in which they live. Future research in this area would do well to flesh out further ideas of how people perceive place, how strongly they identify with place, and how different regions of the country value the place in which they live. In doing so, a clearer picture of place can be developed in future research and build on the previous studies that demonstrate how place-based identities affect political and social perspectives.

Concluding Remarks

From the beginning, I expected that place would play an influential factor in people's perceptions about politics. While this dissertation research was able to demonstrate that place played a small, limited role in moderating and influencing individual perceptions towards political candidates and other citizens, this research contributed some new avenues towards the study on the relationship between politics and place. Chapter two utilized existing survey

research combined with geographic data in order to assess the attitudes of Americans from both rural and urban areas. Chapters three and four utilized survey experiments to examine the responses of people toward political candidates and their fellow citizens. While the survey experiments results suggest that place acts as a social identity and subsequently leads to positive evaluations of people who are geographically similar to one another, further work can build on these results to further refine our understanding on the role of place on political attitudes. Overall, this research demonstrated that place does matter under certain conditions, yet a better understanding is required as political scientists and practitioners reconcile the underpinnings of the politics of place and the urban-rural divide in American politics.

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APPENDIX I

Table A-1.1: Summary Statistics of Independent Variables in ANES and NCHS Dataset

Variables	n	Percent	Std Dev	Min	Max
Age	6,161	100%	16.63	18	93
Income	6,161	100%	1.13	1	5
- 0 - 16 Percentile	846	13.7%			
- 17 – 33 Percentile	994	16.1%			
- 34 – 67 Percentile	2,210	35.9%			
- 68 – 95 Percentile	1,662	27%			
- 96 – 100 Percentile	449	7.3%			
Length of Res.	6,161	100%	26.03	0	90
Race	6,161	100%	0.82	0	3
- White	4,575	74.3%			
- Black	675	10.9%			
- Hispanic	710	11.5%			
- Other	201	3.3%			
Ideology	6,161	100%	0.81	0	2
- Liberal	1,586	25.7%			
- Moderate	1,993	32.4%			
- Conservative	2,582	41.9%			
Education	6,161	100%	1.14	0	4
- Not Completed HS	521	8.5%			
- High School Diploma	1,713	27.8%			
- Some College	1,905	30.9%			
- College Degree	1,299	21.1%			
- Advanced Degree	723	11.7%			
Gender	6,161	100%	0.50	0	1
- Male	2,964	48.1%			
- Female	3,197	51.9%			
Geographic Region	6,161	100%	0.47	0	1
- Non-South	4,086	66.3%			
- South	2,075	33.7%			

Table A-1.2: Summary Statistics of Variables Used in Candidate Experiment

Variables	n	Percent	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Co-Partisanship	2,315	100%	0.49	0	1
- Does Not Share w/Candidate (0)	1,198	51.75%			
- Shares Partisanship w/Candidate (1)	1,117	48.25%			
Co-Geography	2,315	100%	0.82	0	1
- Does Not Share Geography w/Candidate (0)	995	32.9%			
- Does Not Know Candidate Geography (1)	998	33%			
- Shares Geography w/Candidate (2)	1,031	34.1%			
Party Identification	3,024	100%	0.79	0	2
- Other (0)	709	23.45%			
- Republican (1)	1,021	33.76%			
- Democrat (2)	1,294	42.79%			
Vote for Candidate	3,024	100%	1.697	0	6
- Extremely Unlikely (0)	284	9.39%			
- Moderately Unlikely (1)	128	4.23%			
- Slightly Unlikely (2)	141	4.66%			
- Neither Likely or Unlikely (3)	931	30.79%			
- Slightly Likely (4)	535	17.69%			
- Moderately Likely (5)	631	20.87%			
- Extremely Likely (6)	374	12.37%			
How Well Candidate Will Represent Community	3,024	100%	1.179	0	4
- Not Well at All (0)	387	12.8%			
- Slightly Well (1)	483	15.97%			
- Moderately Well (2)	1,107	36.61%			
- Very Well (3)	669	22.12%			
- Extremely Well (4)	378	12.50%			
Impression of the Candidate is Positive	3,024	100%	1.42	0	6
- Strongly Disagree (0)	97	3.21%			
- Disagree (1)	75	2.48%			
- Somewhat Disagree (2)	121	4%			
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	791	26.16%			
- Somewhat Agree (4)	705	23.31%			
- Agree (5)	776	25.66%			
- Strongly Agree (6)	459	15.18%			
Would Candidate Make a Good Governor	3,024	100%	1.42	0	6
- Strongly Disagree (0)	113	3.74%			
- Disagree (1)	113	3.74%			
- Somewhat Disagree (2)	169	5.59%			
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	1,123	37.14%			
- Somewhat Agree (4)	578	19.11%			
- Agree (5)	626	20.70%			

- Strongly Agree (6)	302	9.99%			
Respect for the Candidate	3,024	100%	1.34	0	6
- Strongly Disagree (0)	77	2.55%			
- Disagree (1)	79	2.61%			
- Somewhat Disagree (2)	115	3.8%			
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	1,114	36.84%			
- Somewhat Agree (4)	644	21.3%			
- Agree (5)	646	21.36%			
- Strongly Agree (6)	349	11.54%			
How Well Candidate Will Represent Values	3,024	100%	1.46	0	6
- Strongly Disagree (0)	144	4.76%			
- Disagree (1)	157	5.19%			
- Somewhat Disagree (2)	218	7.21%			
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	1,180	39.02%			
- Somewhat Agree (4)	597	19.74%			
- Agree (5)	437	14.45%			
- Strongly Agree (6)	291	9.62%			
How Much Trust for the Candidate	3,024	100%	1.39	0	6
- Strongly Disagree (0)	137	4.53%			
- Disagree (1)	133	4.4%			
- Somewhat Disagree (2)	209	6.91%			
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	1,376	45.5%			
- Somewhat Agree (4)	539	17.82%			
- Agree (5)	378	12.5%			
- Strongly Agree (6)	252	8.33%			

Table A-1.3: Summary Statistics of Variables Used in Citizen Experiment

Variables	n	Percent	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Respondent Geography	3,024	100%	0.89	0	2
- Somewhat Urban/Somewhat Rural (0)	1,005	33.2%			
- Rural (1)	593	19.6%			
- Urban (2)	1,426	47.2%			
Positive Impression of Individual	3,024	100%	1.6	0	6
- Strongly Disagree (0)	207	6.9%			
- Disagree (1)	169	5.6%			
- Somewhat Disagree (2)	314	10.4%			
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	999	33%			
- Somewhat Agree (4)	527	17.4%			
- Agree (5)	491	16.2%			
- Strongly Agree (6)	317	10.5%			
Finds Individual to be Responsible	3,024	100%	1.55	0	6
- Strongly Disagree (0)	150	5%			
- Disagree (1)	223	7.4%			
- Somewhat Disagree (2)	332	11%			
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	967	32%			
- Somewhat Agree (4)	579	19.1%			
- Agree (5)	482	15.9%			
- Strongly Agree (6)	291	9.6%			
Respects the Individual	3,024	100%	1.50	0	6
- Strongly Disagree (0)	136	4.5%			
- Disagree (1)	145	4.8%			
- Somewhat Disagree (2)	242	8%			
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	1,088	36%			
- Somewhat Agree (4)	531	17.6%			
- Agree (5)	567	18.7%			
- Strongly Agree (6)	315	10.4%			
Willing to Socially Interact with Individual	3,024	100%	1.55	0	6
- Strongly Disagree (0)	189	6.2%			
- Disagree (1)	205	6.8%			
- Somewhat Disagree (2)	231	7.6%			
- Neither Agree or Disagree (3)	1,106	36.6%			
- Somewhat Agree (4)	556	18.4%			
- Agree (5)	451	14.9%			
- Strongly Agree (6)	286	9.5%			
Perceived Ideology of Individual	3,024	100%	1.01	0	4
- Very Conservative (0)	341	11.3%			
- Conservative (1)	722	23.9%			
- Moderate (2)	1,310	43.3%			
- Liberal (3)	502	16.6%			

- Very Liberal (4)	149	4.9%			

APPENDIX II

Survey Instrument

Lucid Survey Sept. 2018

Start of Block: Informed Consent

Q176 You are being asked to complete an online research survey that will take approximately 12-15 minutes. This survey is part of a research study conducted by the University of Mississippi. The goal of this survey is to ask you some questions about yourself and obtain your views about current events and public policy. Findings from this study may be reported in scholarly journals, at academic seminars, and at research association meetings. The data will be stored at a secured location and retained indefinitely. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Your participation in this online survey involves risks similar to a person's everyday use of the Internet. No identifying information about you will be made public and any views you express will be kept completely anonymous. Your participation is voluntary. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. There are no known risks associated with this study beyond those associated with everyday life. Although this study will not benefit you personally, we hope that our results will add to the knowledge about how different types of people form their opinions. Note that once you submit responses to the survey the researcher will be unable to extract your anonymous data from the database if you wish it to be withdrawn. To participate in the study, you must be at least 18 years old and a U.S. citizen. If you have any questions about the research, you can contact Jonathan Winburn at jwinburn@olemiss.edu. This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or concerns about the conduct of this study, you may contact The University of Mississippi Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 100 Barr Hall, University, MS 38677, 662-915-7482, irb@olemiss.edu. *

- ○ I agree to participate and acknowledge that I am 18 years or older (1)
- ○ I do not agree to participate or I am not 18 years or older (2)

End of Block: Informed Consent

Start of Block: Geographic Location

Q10 In which state do you currently reside?

▼ Alabama (1) ... I do not reside in the United States (53)

Q35 What is your zip code?

_____

Q84 Which of the following best describes the place where you live

- In open country or on a farm (1)
- In a small town/township/village (2)
- In a small city (3)
- In a medium-size city (4)
- In a suburb near a large city (5)
- In a large city (6)

Q151 How would you consider the place where you live?

- Very urban (1)
- Somewhat urban (2)
- More urban than rural (3)
- More rural than urban (4)
- Somewhat rural (5)
- Very rural (6)

Q85 How closely do you identify with the place where you live?

- Very closely (1)
- Closely (2)
- Somewhat closely (3)
- Not closely at all (4)

Q36 Do you live in the community where you grew up?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q37 How long have you lived in the community where you live now?

- ○ Less than 1 year (1)
- ○ 1 to 5 years (2)
- ○ 6 to 10 years (3)
- ○ 11 to 20 years (4)
- ○ 21 to 30 years (5)
- ○ 31 to 40 years (6)
- ○ More than 50 years (7)
- ○ Don't know (8)

Q38 Did you grow up in the same state that you live in now or a different state?

- ○ Same state (1)
- ○ Different state (2)

Q40 What state did you grow up in?

▼ Alabama (1) ... I do not reside in the United States (53)

End of Block: Geographic Location

Start of Block: Trust

Q28 How much of the time do you think you can trust the **national government in Washington**

DC to do what is right?

- Just about always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- Only some of the time (3)
- Never (4)

Q30 How much of the time do you think you can trust the **state government in** ${lm://Field/2} to do what is right?

- Just about always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- Only some of the time (3)
- Never (4)

Q31 How much of the time do you think you can trust your **local government** to do what is right?

- Just about always (1)
- Most of the time (2)
- Only some of the time (3)
- Never (4)

Page Break

End of Block: Trust

Start of Block: Political Questions

Q26 How satisfied are you with:

	Extremely satisfied (1)	Somewhat satisfied (2)	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3)	Somewhat dissatisfied (4)	Extremely dissatisfied (5)
The national government (8)	○	○	○	○	○
Your state government (9)	○	○	○	○	○
Your local government (10)	○	○	○	○	○

Q27 How much do the political decisions made at each level of government impact your life?

	A great deal (1)	A lot (2)	A moderate amount (3)	A little (4)	None at all (5)
The national government (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Your state government (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Your local government (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Q32 How much attention do you pay to politics at:

	A great deal (1)	A lot (2)	A moderate amount (3)	A little (4)	None at all (5)
The national level (6)	○	○	○	○	○
The state level (7)	○	○	○	○	○
The local level (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Start of Block: Identity Experiment

Q152 Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them:

They are from a small town, recycle, and own a handgun.

Q153 Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them:

They are from a small town, recycle, and do not own a handgun.

Q154 Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them:

They are from a small town, do not recycle, and own a handgun.

Q155 Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them:

They are from a small town, do not recycle, and do not own a handgun.

Q156 Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them:

They are from a large city, recycle, and own a handgun.

Q157 Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them:

They are from a large city, recycle, and do not own a handgun.

Q158 Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them:

They are from a large city, do not recycle, and own a handgun.

Q159 Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them:

They are from a large city, do not recycle, and do not own a handgun.

Q160 Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them:

They do not recycle and do not own a handgun.

Q161 Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them:

They do not recycle and own a handgun.

Q162 Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them:

They recycle and own a handgun.

Q163 Suppose you just met someone and learned the following information about them:

They recycle and do not own a handgun.

Q164 To what extent would you agree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
My overall impression of this person is positive. (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I think this person is responsible. (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I respect this person. (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would like to interact with this person socially. (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q165 If you had to guess, how conservative or liberal do you think this person is?

- ○ Very conservative (1)
- ○ Conservative (2)
- ○ Moderate (3)
- ○ Liberal (4)
- ○ Very Liberal (5)

End of Block: Identity Experiment

Start of Block: Fudge

Q174 This question asks about different groups of people.

Do you think people in these groups have values that are very similar, somewhat similar, somewhat different, or very different from yours?

	Very similar (1)	Somewhat similar (2)	Somewhat different (3)	Very different (4)
People living in rural areas and small towns (1)	○	○	○	○
People living in big cities (2)	○	○	○	○
Recent immigrants to the United States (3)	○	○	○	○

Page Break

Q82 Do you think federal government programs aimed at improving people's standard of living generally make things better, make things worse, or don't have much impact one way or another?

- ○ Better (1)
- ○ Worse (2)
- ○ Don't have much impact (3)
- ○ Don't know (4)

Q86 Do you think the federal government should make it more difficult for people to buy a gun than it is now, make it easier for people to buy a gun than it is now, or keep these rules about the same as they are now?

- ○ Make it easier for people to buy a gun than it is now (1)
- ○ Keep these rules about the same as they are now (2)
- ○ Make it more difficult for people to buy a gun than it is now (3)

Page Break

Q83 How many of your close friends have political views different to your own?

- Most of them (1)
- Some of them (2)
- Hardly any of them (3)
- None of them (4)
- Don't know (5)

Q86 How often do you discuss politics with people who have political opinions different than your own?

	Very often (1)	Somewhat often (2)	Not often (3)	Never (4)	Don't know (5)
In person (1)	○	○	○	○	○
By telephone (2)	○	○	○	○	○
On social media (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q87 Where do you get most of your information regarding politics?

- ○ Friends and family (1)
- ○ Social media (2)
- ○ Newspapers (3)
- ○ Television (4)
- ○ Radio (5)
- ○ Don't know (6)

End of Block: Fudge

Start of Block: Candidate Experiment

Q176 **The next two pages are about a hypothetical candidate for governor in your state. Information about the candidate is presented in a short paragraph. After reading the candidate's biography, you will be presented some questions about the candidate based on what you read.**

Page Break

Q143

John Wilson is a Republican running for governor in your state in the upcoming election. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in a large city in your state and has dedicated his life to serving his community and the people who live there. Mr. Wilson believes in a strong economy and believes in people achieving the American Dream. Mr. Wilson is a small business owner, is married with two children, and lives in the large city in which he grew up.

Q145

John Wilson is a Democrat running for governor in your state in the upcoming election. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in a large city in your state and has dedicated his life to serving his community and the people who live there. Mr. Wilson believes in a strong economy and believes in people achieving the American Dream. Mr. Wilson is a small business owner, is married with two children, and lives in the large city in which he grew up.

Q147

John Wilson is a Democrat running for governor in your state in the upcoming election. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in a small rural town in your state and has dedicated his life to serving his community and the people who live there. Mr. Wilson believes in a strong economy and believes in people achieving the American Dream. Mr. Wilson is a small business owner, is married with two children, and lives in the small rural town in which he grew up.

Q148

John Wilson is a Republican running for governor in your state in the upcoming election. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in a small rural town in your state and has dedicated his life to serving his community and the people who live there. Mr. Wilson believes in a strong economy and believes in people achieving the American Dream. Mr. Wilson is a small business owner, is married with two children, and lives in the small rural town in which he grew up.

Q149

John Wilson is a Republican running for governor in your state in the upcoming election. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in your state and has dedicated his life to serving his community and the people who live there. Mr. Wilson believes in a strong economy and believes in people achieving the American Dream. Mr. Wilson is a small business owner, is married with two children, and lives in the state.

Q150

John Wilson is a Democrat running for governor in your state in the upcoming election. Mr. Wilson was born and raised in your state and has dedicated his life to serving his community and the people who live there. Mr. Wilson believes in a strong economy and believes in people achieving the American Dream. Mr. Wilson is a small business owner, is married with two children, and lives in the state.

End of Block: Candidate Experiment

Start of Block: Candidate Experiment Questions

Q114 How likely are you to vote for John Wilson in the upcoming election?

- ○ Extremely likely (1)
- ○ Moderately likely (2)
- ○ Slightly likely (3)
- ○ Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
- ○ Slightly unlikely (5)
- ○ Moderately unlikely (6)
- ○ Extremely unlikely (7)

Q115 How well do you think John Wilson would represent the community where you live?

- ○ Extremely well (1)
- ○ Very well (2)
- ○ Moderately well (3)
- ○ Slightly well (4)
- ○ Not well at all (5)

Q174 Based on the information presented about John Wilson, to what extent would you agree

with the following statements.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
My overall impression of John Wilson is positive. (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I think John Wilson would make a good governor. (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I respect John Wilson. (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I trust John Wilson (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
John Wilson represents my values. (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q166 How conservative or liberal do you think John Wilson is?

- Very conservative (1)
- Conservative (2)
- Moderate (3)
- Liberal (4)
- Very liberal (5)

End of Block: Candidate Experiment Questions

Start of Block: Political Knowledge

Q177 **Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.**

Q43 Who is the current Vice President of the United States?

- Mike Pence (1)
- Dick Cheney (2)
- Joe Biden (3)
- Jeff Sessions (4)

Q44 Who is the current Prime Minister of Great Britain?

- Justin Trudeau (1)
- Malcolm Turnbull (2)
- Emmanuel Macron (3)
- Theresa May (4)

Q45 What position does John Roberts hold?

- US Senator (1)
- Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (2)
- Attorney General of the United States (3)
- Mayor of New York City (4)

Q46 Who is the current governor of ${lm://Field/1}?

- ${lm://Field/2} (1)
- ${lm://Field/3} (2)
- ${lm://Field/4} (3)
- ${lm://Field/5} (4)

End of Block: Political Knowledge

Start of Block: Demographics

Q89 What is your gender?

- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)
- ○ Other/Not Listed (3)

Q90 What racial or ethnic group or groups best describes you (select all that apply)?

- ☐ White (1)
- ☐ Black (8)
- ☐ Hispanic (2)
- ☐ Asian (3)
- ☐ Native American (4)
- ☐ Pacific Islander (5)
- ☐ Other (7)

Q94 Last year, what was your total household income before taxes, from all sources?

- ○ Under 20,000 dollars (1)
- ○ 20-35,000 dollars (2)
- ○ 35-50,000 dollars (3)
- ○ 50-75,000 dollars (4)
- ○ 75-100,000 dollars (5)
- ○ 100,000 or more dollars (6)
- ○ Refuse to answer (8)

Q180 What year were you born?

▼ 2000 (1) ... 1900 (101)

Q138 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than High School (1)
- High School / GED (2)
- Some College (3)
- 2-year College Degree (4)
- 4-year College Degree (5)
- Masters Degree (6)
- Doctoral Degree (7)
- Professional Degree (JD, MD) (8)

Q140 Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a …?

- Democrat (1)
- Republican (2)
- Independent (3)
- Other (4)
- Not Sure (5)

Q142 Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic or the Republican Party?

- ○ Democratic Party (1)
- ○ Republican Party (2)
- ○ Neither (3)

Q144 Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

- ○ Strong (1)
- ○ Not Very Strong (2)

Q146 Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

- ○ Strong (1)
- ○ Not Very Strong (2)

Page Break

Q148 Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as:

- Very Liberal (1)
- Liberal (2)
- Somewhat Liberal (3)
- Middle of the Road (4)
- Somewhat Conservative (5)
- Conservative (6)
- Very Conservative (7)

Q150 How interested are you in politics and current events?

- Very interested (1)
- Somewhat interested (2)
- Not at all interested (3)

Q171 Did you vote in the 2016 Presidential Election?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q173 How likely are you to vote in the 2018 Congressional Midterm Elections this November?

- ○ Very Unlikely (1)
- ○ Unlikely (2)
- ○ Somewhat Unlikely (3)
- ○ Somewhat Likely (5)
- ○ Likely (6)
- ○ Very Likely (7)

End of Block: Demographics

VITA

Daniel J. Fudge

Education

University of Mississippi, *Department of Political Science*
Ph.D., Political Science, Spring 2019.

Major Field**:** American Politics, Minor Field: International Relations
Dissertation: "The Politics of "Place", the Urban-Rural Divide, and Geographic Identity in American Politics"
Committee: Dr. Jonathan Winburn (Chair), Dr. Conor Dowling, Dr. Robert Brown, and Dr. Jody Holland

University of Mississippi, *Department of Political Science*
M.A., Political Science, May 2016.

University of Arkansas Fort Smith, *Department of English*
B.A., English, December 2012.
Magna Cum Laude

Research/Teaching Interests

State and Local Politics, Congressional Representation, Rural Politics, Campaigns and Elections, Political Behavior, Public Opinion, American Political Institutions, Public Policy

Research

Refereed Publications

Daniel Fudge & Sue Ann Skipworth (2017): Kids in the Capitol: Improving Civic Literacy through Experiential Learning, *Learning: Research and Practice*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, p. 163-167.

Under Review

"Geographic Differences of Individual Views on the Role of Government"

Works in Progress

"Place-Based Appeals and Geographic Identities: How Place Affects Voter Perceptions of Political Candidates"

Teaching

Instructor of Record
POL 101: Introduction to American Politics: Spring 2018, Fall 2018
POL 316: State and Local Politics: Summer 2019

Teaching Assistant
POL 101: Introduction to American Politics: Fall 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2017, Fall 2017

POL 399: Legislative Simulation: Fall 2017

Conference Presentations

2019 Southern Political Science Association, Austin, Texas
Presentation: "Place-Based Appeals and Geographic Identities: How Place Affects Voter Perceptions of Political Candidates"

2018 Symposium on Southern Politics at The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina
Presentation: "Urban, Suburban, and Rural Perceptions on the Role of Government in the American South"

2018 Southern Political Science Association, New Orleans, Louisiana
Presentation: "United States, Divided Populace: Tracking the Origins of the Urban-Rural Divide"

Honors, Awards, and Service

Honors

Innovation Fellow, McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement, Fall 2015 – Spring 2016

Awards

University of Mississippi Graduate School, 2019 Spring Dissertation Fellowship Award, $6,500
College of Liberal Arts, 2018 Summer Graduate Research Award, $5,000
Cook-Prestage Travel Award, 2018 Southern Political Science Conference, $300
College of Liberal Arts, 2017 Summer Graduate Research Award, $5,000

Service

Panel Discussant, 2017 Pi Sigma Alpha Undergraduate Research Conference, Spring 2017
President Pro Tempore, University of Mississippi Graduate Student Council, Fall 2014 – Spring 2016
Kids in the Capitol Project, Spring 2016